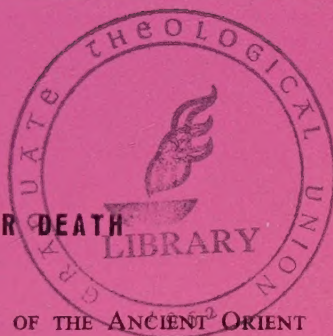


TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

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LIFE AFTER DEATH



TAMMUZ IN THE TRADITION OF THE ANCIENT ORIENT

Bona Marcel Rodrigues

DEATH'S AFTERMATH: THE ARYAN TRADITION

K. Luke

DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN THE JEWISH APOCALYPTIC

Thomas Sebastian

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH

K. M. Sebastian

NIRVANA

K. Luke

Jeevadhara is published in two editions,
English and Malayalam

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JEEVADHARA

The Word of God

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Editor:

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Kerala, India

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Editorial

Some time or other in life man will have to face the question of the aftermath of death, and since no one has ever had experience of the state of affairs consequent upon death, the answers given by the teachers of the past and the present have been quite varied. An enumeration of these answers need not be attempted here, since many of them are sufficiently well known to the readers of *Jeevadhara*. The Judaeo-Christian tradition has something definite to say about what it is going to be after death, and this statement, found recorded in the two Testaments, has to be constantly reaffirmed, and also reflected upon, and this is what the current issue of *Jeevadhara* endeavours to do.

It may appear somewhat anomalous that the present number includes three non-biblical studies as against two biblical ones. The section editor would like to indicate here the reason for this apparent lack of proportion: an entire issue of our contemporary* discussed several aspects of the problem of resurrection, and to try to cover the ground that has already been ably done would be a sheer waste.

The first biblical article surveys the data furnished by the Jewish literature of the intertestamental period, namely, by the books called 'apocrypha' by Catholics and 'pseudepigrapha' by Protestants. These works embody a definite teaching about the aftermath of death: they include, for example, the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting, doctrines which are so basic to the Judaeo-Christian faith. Thomas Sebastian synthesizes the teachings scattered in the apocrypha, thus providing the reader with the background necessary for the understanding of the NT ideas about death's aftermath.

In the course of his ministry the Apostle Paul had to face the problem created by man's anxiety about death and the obscurity surrounding the state of the dead. In the Church at Corinth, for instance, there were people who denied resurrection, and to put at rest the agitated minds of the Corinthians, Paul found it imperative to restate succinctly his preaching about resurrection. The Apostle's thought is studied by K. M. Sebastian.

* *Biblehashyam*, Vol. 3, June 1977

The opening article by Bona Marcel discusses the problem of Tammuz. Readers have, to be sure, heard it said that the Biblical idea of resurrection was derived from the tradition about the death and coming back to life of Tammuz current among the Sumerians and Accadians. Since the work done by professional Sumeriologists and Assyriologists remains virtually unknown to many a reader, it was thought opportune that a study summarizing their conclusions would be in place, and it is hoped that Marcel's contribution will help clear away some widespread misconceptions.

The article dealing with the traditions of the Aryans concentrates on Zarathushtra's teaching, and this for two reasons: on the one hand they show close affinity with the traditions of Judaism and Christianity, and there have been scholars who thought that the latter owe their origin to the religion of Persia; on the other hand they highlight some aspects of ancient Aryan religious thought which have been lost sight of in India. The exclusive concern of the second article is to make the reader familiar with the teachings of the only prophet of the Aryans—teaching which sound so familiar to Judaeo-Christian ears.

The last contribution tries to recapitulate what, according to many eminent authorities, for instance Louis de la Vallée Poussin, has been the teaching of the Buddha concerning *nirvāṇa*. The Enlightened One, without ever claiming to be a prophet, i. e., spokesman of the personal God who governs the process of history and leads it to the goal He has Himself long since fixed, came to proclaim a way of salvation. As a matter of fact, he was wont to affirm that his mission was to teach man the path leading to the elimination of suffering; formulated positively, the Buddha's mission was to point out to man the way to the attainment of supreme bliss, which, in his terminology, is the same as *nirvāṇa*, "extinction" (of the flame). The writer wishes to avow that he has not been able to do full justice to the topic.

Men generally shudder at the thought of death, and if there is anything that makes life meaningful, it is the assurance that there is something beyond death: this is the great truth that each contribution in the present issue of *Jeevadhara* tries to highlight.

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Tammuz in the Traditions of the Ancient Orient

In the present study an endeavour is made to interpret one of the most interesting religious conceptions of the Ancient Middle East, synthesized in the most admirable fashion in the myth of Tammuz, the youthful god of life who every year undergoes death. The enlightened Christian believer must have some acquaintance with the present day views of specialists on Tammuz, for he will often hear it said by popular writers that the biblical idea of the resurrection is ultimately derived from the myth of this particular god. It is a fact that Tammuz died, but did he rise again to life?

I. The God Tammuz

Apparently one of the earliest elements in the religion of the ancient Middle East was the belief in a great female deity who was the source of fertility in all its forms. A young god was frequently associated with her, and he personified the blooming and fading of vegetation. He appears mostly as the beloved of the great goddess, suddenly loses his life in one way or other, is mourned by the goddess, and perhaps also awakes to new life.¹ The divine couple appear in Mesopotamia among the Sumerians under the names Inanna-Dumuzi and among the Accadians under those of Ishtar-Tammuz.

Now Tammuz is the Hebrew modification of the Sumerian name Dumuzi, which occurs too in the shortened form Dumu. The name is generally interpreted as *Dumu*, "son" and *zi* (from *zid*), "true;" hence Dumuzi is the "true son". Thorkild Jacobsen, however, suggests that *Dumu* is the object of the element *zi(d)*, and sees in the latter a factitive *nomen agentis* of the stem *zi(d)*, "to quicken, make vigorous". The appellation Dumuzi

1) T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness. A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven, 1976, pp. 23-73.

will, in this understanding, mean "the Quickener of the Child".² In the Babylonian language the name has the form *Du'uzi* (which through contraction becomes *Dūzi*; *Da'uzi* and *Damuzi*, occurring in the sources, are only dialectal variants of the present name.

Cuneiform texts refer to three persons bearing the name Dumuzi. First there is the god Dumuzi, then the mythical ruler of the city of Badtibira, and lastly one of the rulers of the Sumerian city of Uruk, who is certainly an historical personage. Dumuzi of Badtibira is mentioned by the compilation known as "The Sumerian Kinglist", and the relevant text runs thus: ^dDUMU. ZI SIPA MU 36,000 I. A₅, "divine Dumuzi, a shepherd, reigned 36,000 years".³ The same document also mentions Dumuzi of Uruk: ^dDUMU. ZI SHU. PESH URU (ki). NI KU. A (ki) MU 100 I. A₅, "divine Dumuzi, a fisherman - his city was Kua(ra) - reigned 100 years".⁴ With Dumuzi of Uruk we are in the historical period, and the passage here cited informs us that he was a native of the city of Kua(ra), situated in the vicinity of the well-known site of Uruk, and by profession he was a SHU. PESH, "fisherman". It is customary in the Sumerian Kinglist to indicate the profession that used to be exercised by the individual rulers before their coming to the throne: thus Gilgamesh was the highpriest of the city of Kullab.⁵

We are here concerned exclusively with the god Dumuzi/Tammuz, to whom reference is made in the cuneiform sources from the earliest times onwards.⁶ He is also known from Greek,

2) Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture* (Harvard Semitic Series 21, Harvard, 1970) pp. 338f.

3) Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Assyriological Studies 11, 4th impres., Chicago, 1973) pp. 72f.

4) Jacobsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 f.

5) Jacobsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 90 f.

6) Exhaustive survey of evidence for Tammuz from the very beginning to the age of Hammurabi in A. Falkenstein, "Tammuz," *Compte rendu de la III^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Paris, 1954) pp. 41-65.

Syriac and Arabic sources, which simply reproduce the cuneiform traditions. In Mesopotamian mythology Dumuzi is the brother and husband of Inanna,⁷ the goddess of love and war who actually represents the mother-goddess figure mentioned above. The mythology of Tammuz can be reconstructed from a number of Sumerian poems, the details about which cannot be discussed here. Modern scholars are agreed that he was above all a god of fertility.

We have now to find the way back to the specific religious experiences that underlie the figure of Tammuz, "the Quickener of the Child" (in the mother's womb), or the divine power that gives rise to new life. For this we must also endeavour to identify the concrete loci in the external world in which a feeling suggestive of this particular kind of symbolization might naturally have arisen. Only then can we try, out of our own experience, to recapture in sympathetic understanding such value and truth as that symbolization may possess as an expression of the "unchanging human heart."

Analyzing thus the figure of Tammuz in terms of the places and phenomena where the power of new life representing the god used to be encountered by the ancient Mesopotamians, we are able to distinguish four different aspects, each with its own specific designation: 1) power in the sap that rises in trees and plants, named Damu; 2) power in the date palm and its fruits, called Dumuzi Ama-ushumgal-anna; 3) power in grain and beer, bearing the appellation Dumuzi of the grain (corn); 4) power in milk, designated as Dumuzi the Shepherd.⁸ In his capacity as the shepherd, Dumuzi is the life-giving power in the milk. When the milking season comes to an end, and fresh milk ceases to flow, it means that Dumuzi has died. This death of the god was given form by mythopoeic imagination in various ways. And all the four items have one

7) In Sumerian this name means the Lady (*in*, from *nin*) of heaven (*an*, *na* being the genitival suffix). Among the Accadians the figure corresponding to her was Ishtar, and both the goddesses stand for the star Venus.

8) Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, pp. 73f.

thing in common, namely, they are all connected with food stuffs, and reveal an indwelling basic power of life.

II. The Tammuz Cult

The powers to which the ancients turned were the ones in and behind their primary economics on which life depended, i. e., fishing, herding and agriculture. The ultimate purpose of their cult was to ensure the presence of these essential powers of fertility, production and food. To realize this aim two means were at hand for the ancients, the cult drama and the usual temple cult. In the former man takes on the identity of a numinous power and, thus identified, actuates it by letting it realize itself externally in the cult act. The most important of the Sumerian cult dramas were: 1) the *hieros gamos*, "sacred marriage", in which the king assumed the identity of the god Dumuzi and through a ritual act of coitus ensured magically that the power of fertility was assured for the coming year; 2) the battle drama at the New Year in Babylon, in which the king, as embodiment of the god Marduk, symbolically subdued the forces of chaos and established the ordered cosmos; 3) the lament for the dead god Dumuzi, with its vivid expression of grief and longing, served to strengthen the community's ties with the lost power of life.⁹ As for the Tammuz cult, its constitutive elements were the sacred marriage and the lament over his death.

The sacred marriage used to be celebrated most joyously and rapturously in Mesopotamia for some three thousand years. There is no doubt that it was the Sumerian priests and poets of the early third millenium B. C. who developed it as an integral element of their religious faith and practice.¹⁰ Sumerian culture fostered an obsessive drive for wealth and possessions, a drive that could be sustained in an agricultural and pastoral economy only by fertility of the land and the womb. This

9) Jacobsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-87.

10) Details in S. N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite. Aspects of Faith, Myth and Ritual in Ancient Summer* (Bloomington, 1969).

basic need is the key to our understanding of the rite of sacred marriage.

The lament over Dumuzi's death, performed by both men and women, was a commemoration of his death. This took place in Babylon on the second day of the fourth month, which, for this reason, bore the name Tammuz, and from the testimony of the OT we know that women in Israel used to mourn over the god's death.¹¹ The lament was accompanied by the shrill music of flutes, and at times images of the god, dressed to resemble corpses, were taken round and then thrown into the sea; the next day his revival was also celebrated.

III. Death of Tammuz

The myth of the death of Tammuz has been investigated by several scholars, and in our study we follow the analysis of the great Sumeriologist Samuel Noah Kramer.¹² According to Kramer what prompted the Sumerian mythographers to doom Dumuzi to death was the fact that many of the expectations associated with the *hieros gamos* were often not fulfilled. The grim truth was that for half the year, during the long, dry Mesopotamian summer, vegetation was dried up and the stall and the fold were barren and sterile. This could only mean that the god who was in charge of these essential elements of life was dead and gone, and hence could no longer function. But how then could this be reconciled with the reassuring belief that Dumuzi had wed Inanna? To resolve this dilemma the Sumerian theologians put their imagination to work and created an intricate tale of frustrated ambition, divine jealousy, ungrateful infidelity and tender love.

Sumerian texts recount how Inanna, for reasons which are not clarified, decided to descend into the world of the dead, where her own sister and bitter adversary Ereshkigal was reigning

11) Cf. Ez. 8:14 where the prophet Ezekiel refers to women who are mourning over Tammuz.

12) *Op. cit.*, pp. 107-33. The texts cited in this section are all from Kramer's translation of the Sumerian poems.

as queen. Inanna reaches the gates of the underworld with her vizier, and while the latter waits outside, she goes in, and Ereshkigal is so enraged that she decided to put her sister to death. The poets describe graphically how on her entering the gate Inanna was divested of her rich finery and was finally made naked; Ereshkigal punished her, turning her into a corpse which was then hung by a nail. The vizier, perceiving that his mistress is not coming out, approached the god Enki, and he through stealth manages to revive Inanna, but there is a divine rule that nobody can leave the nether world without providing a substitute. Inanna is prepared to fulfil this condition, and, accompanied by demons, she goes in quest of a substitute. All those who did her homage were spared, and when at last she found her husband Dumuzi, dressed in noble garments and sitting on a lofty throne without in the least being bothered about his wife, she was furious:

‘She fastened her eye upon him, the eye of death,
Spoke the word against him, the word of wrath,
Uttered the cry against him, the cry of guilt.’

Dumuzi is handed over there and then to the impatiently waiting demons, who now begin to torture him. The god's sister Geshtinanna tries to save him by offering to take his place in the nether world, and Inanna can hardly refuse this generous gesture. Since she does not want to see her husband go unpunished, she decides Solomon like that he should stay in the underworld for half the year and his sister for the other half. This, in short, is the myth of Dumuzi's death. The Sumerian poets explicitly note that “Dumuzi lives no more... Dumuzi is dead.”¹³

There are liturgical compositions embodying laments over the death of Dumuzi. What follows is part of Inanna's lament over her bridegroom:

“Gone has my husband, sweet husband,
Gone has my son, sweet son,
My husband has gone among the ‘head plants’,
My husband has gone among the ‘rear plants’.

13) Kramer, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

My husband who has gone to seek food, has been
turned over the plants,
My bridegroom like a hand crushed...
Has departed from the city..”

From the literary point of view the laments over Tammuz are remarkable for the element of pathos and longing, and as so many expressions of man who is confronted by the fact of death they have also a profound religious significance.

The meaning of the myth of Tammuz' death is quite evident. Summer in Mesopotamia was something most unpleasant. Vegetation dies out, the hot dust carried by the wind hurts the eyes and lungs, and men and beasts, losing resilience, have to submit to the protracted scourge. The gods too must share in this experience, for after all they are also part of the universe, and this belief comes to expression in the myth of the death of the god of life.

IV. The question of Tammuz' resurrection

The British anthropologist Sir James Frazer has popularized the idea of the annual death and resurrection of the God of Life,¹⁴ and his interpretations were taken as absolute truth by numerous writers. What is most queer, even the British Assyriologist Stephen Langdon enthusiastically endorsed the views of Frazer,¹⁵ while others like Heinrich Zimmern¹⁶ were content with the objective analysis of the data. Soon after World War II the German archaeologist Anton Moortgat examined the data furnished by Mesopotamian art and came to the conclusion that Thammuz' death and resurrection were the central events of the liturgical year of ancient Western Asia; he goes to the extent of designating Tammuz as the god-man,

14) He propounded his thesis in 1906; cf. his famous work *The Golden Bough* (abbr. ed., London, 1970).

15) This was done in his monograph *Tammuz and Ishtar* (London, 1914).

16) In his work *Der babylonische Gott Tammuz* (Leipzig, 1909).

and his death and resurrection as the Easter-event!¹⁷ Furthermore, Moortgat thinks that the royal tombs of Ur vouch for the ritual celebration of Tammuz' resurrection: the dead body of the king who acted the part of the dying god was removed from the burial chamber through the ceiling, and since the king was identified with Tammuz, the removal of his corpse meant his coming back to life together with the god. What shall we say about this theory? Well, no specialist has taken seriously Moortgat's interpretation of the data from Mesopotamian art, and his understanding of the nature of the royal tombs of Ur, for the whole thing is an *a priori* reconstruction based upon simple hypotheses and untenable postulates.¹⁸

Several biblical scholars, particularly of the Scandinavian countries, who form the so-called "Myth and Ritual School", whole-heartedly endorse the theory of Tammuz' resurrection. They also argue that in ancient Israel the death and resurrection of the god of life used to be celebrated annually on the New Year day, and that the king played the god's part. It has even been suggested that Yahweh was a dying and rising deity!¹⁹ The whole theory should be rejected outright, for there is not a single bit of evidence in the OT to support it.

Careful study of the Sumerian sources shows that there is no question of a resurrection of Tammuz. There is the unlikely possibility that Inanna's revolutionary and subversive invasion of the nether world was motivated by her desire to raise the dead and thus eliminate altogether death. However, the myth of her descent into hell does not offer any reason for her action, and as the narrative itself shows, Dumuzi was not in the world of the dead when the goddess arrived there. What the myth tells

17) Moortgat, *Tammuz, Der Unsterblichkeitsglaube in der altorientalischen Bildkunst* (Berlin, 1949) p. 41. Scathing criticism of this work in F. R. Kraus, "Zu Moortgat, 'Tammuz'," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 52 (1953) pp. 36-80.

18) Kraus, *op. cit.*, pp. 75f.

19) The representatives of the school have published several monographs and articles, references to which can be found in the various introductions to the OT.

us is that it was the goddess herself who sent him to the underworld after she had reascended thence.

An Assyrian text has often been interpreted in terms of the death and resurrection of Marduk, the god of Babylon; in this understanding Marduk takes the place of Tammuz, dies and rises again to life. The text, which is somewhat damaged, has been submitted to a fresh examination recently, and the conclusion arrived at is that the whole compilation is a piece of political propaganda, created to justify Sennacherib's sack of Babylon; the narrative is a parody, which makes the god of Babylon undergo a humiliating ordeal in the presence of Asshur, the god of Assyria, for his failure to recognize the latter's authority.²⁰

We come finally to a late Assyrian text which has often been cited in support of the theory of Thammuz' resurrection; the speaker here is Geshtinanna, Tammuz' own sister:²¹

"My only brother, bring no harm to me,
On the day when Tammuz comes up to me (*el-la-an-ni*),
When with him the lapis flute and carnelian ring come up
to me,
When with him the wailing men and the wailing women
come up to me,
May the dead rise (*li-lu-nim ma*) and smell the incense."

The main thing to be noted here is that the verbs *ellanni* (line 2) and *lilunimma* (line 5) are both derived from the root *elā*, "to go up", corresponding to the Hebrew verb *'ālāh*. The apparent reference to the resurrection in the present passage has been counted as a late interpolation which is devoid of any worth and value, and hence there is no question of a resurrection of

20) W. von Soden, "Gibt es ein Zeugnis dafür, dass die Babylonier an die Wiederauferstehung Marduks geglaubt haben?" *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 51 (1955) pp. 130-36.

21) For what follows, cf. E. M. Yamauchi "Tammuz and the Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965) pp. 283-90 (cf. especially pp. 285-89); id., "Additional Notes on Tammuz", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 11 (1966) pp. 10-15.

Tammuz in the text.²² The fact, however, seems to be that in the text there is no reference to resurrection, for the verbs can very well mean the departed soul's coming to the earth to partake of the food that is set apart for it,²³ and when the sister asks Tammuz not to bring her harm, she is certainly thinking of him as a frightening, evil-bearing ghost. To conclude, Tammuz' resurrection is a theory for which there is no evidence,²⁴ a theory which has often been enthusiastically sponsored by critics with a view to explaining away the Judaeo-Christian idea of the resurrection of the dead.

V. Tammuz as a religious symbol

The figure of Tammuz is a product of the religious genius of the people of ancient Mesopotamia, so that it must be viewed primarily as a religious symbol. We shall, in this section, try to clarify the significance of this symbol, taking as our starting point Ezekiel's remark that women in Jerusalem were weeping over Tammuz (8:14).²⁵ The main elements in the mythology and ritual associated with this Mesopotamian god are wedding (or love as it is experienced by the bride) and lament over the god's death (or longing for the one who is husband, brother and son). Inasmuch as he is connected with life, Tammuz is the numinous power that quickens the child in the womb and

22) Thus O. R. Gurney, "Tammuz Reconsidered: Some Recent Developments", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7 (1962) pp. 147-60 (cf. pp. 159f.).

23) Yamauchi writes: "It would seem more plausible to explain the rising both of Tammuz and of the dead as the ascent of the spirits to partake of the offerings made to the gods. It is well known that neglected and famished spirits rose and fed on the garbage thrown into the streets" ("Additional Notes," p. 13).

24) Compare the words of Kramer: "The prevalent view that Dumuzi is resurrected every spring is quite without basis in fact. To judge from the available evidence... the Sumerians believed that once Dumuzi died, he 'stayed dead' in the Nether World and never 'rose' again" ("Sumerian Literature and the Bible", *Studia Biblica et Orientalia*. III. *Oriens Antiquus* [Analecta Biblica 12, Rome, 1959] p. 198, n. 1).

25) Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, pp. 89-99.

sustains animals and the vegetable world, and in this special capacity of his he is an object of fascination and attraction for the community; in other words, he answers a need-love.

Tammuz' death involves the loss of life for the world of men, animals and vegetation, and the laments over him, with expressions of love and longing, are a yearning for the fulness of life. As a symbol of life in all its fulness the figure of Tammuz is again an object of fascination and attraction. In the final analysis the rites of *hieros gamos* and lament point to the tendency in man to be united with the principle of life, and to possess it when it is no more present. ¹

According to the Christian faith God is the principle of life, and the twofold tendency just mentioned will be fully satisfied only in the aftermath of death. This truth was altogether unknown to the creators of the figure of Tammuz, and it was disclosed to the community of God's people in the OT only at a very late period in history. To enjoy the fulness of life, the Christian believer need not have recourse to the techniques of the Tammuz cult: he has other means at his disposal.

For the purpose of the present study it is not necessary to touch upon the question whether the Tammuz tradition has in any way influenced the OT. We have been trying to show how the non-biblical world, through a sublime symbol it has created, tried to find an answer to the problem created by the fact of death.

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Bona Marcel Rodrigues

Death's Aftermath: the Aryan Tradition

The mere mention of the Aryan ideas about the aftermath of death will conjure up in the minds of many readers the Upaniṣadic teaching about the cycle of rebirths and man's transcending of it through the realization of his own identity with the Absolute. Let it not be forgotten that the Ṛgveda, the earliest of the Indian scriptures, puts before us an altogether different picture, a picture that is unfortunately not given much importance by writers in India, and as for the tradition of Iran surviving in the Gāthās of Zarathushtra, it remains virtually unknown. It is the purpose of this study to survey briefly the first Veda, and then the Gāthās, to see what they have to say about death's aftermath.

I

The Ṛgveda speaks in glowing terms of heaven, the abode of the gods and the ancestors, which is also visualized as the realm of Yama,¹ son of Vivasvant.² The figure of this god goes back to the period of Indo-Iranian unity, for it is to be met with in the Avesta too, the name having become Yima in accordance with the principles of phonology in the language of ancient Iran.³ The appellation literally means "twin", a

1) The works dealing with Vedic religion and mythology include more or less detailed accounts of the God and his rôle in the religion of the ancient Aryans: detailed discussions in J. Ehni, *Der vedische Mythos des Yama* (Strassburg, 1890); *Die ursprüngliche Gottheit des vedischen Yama* (Leipzig, 1896).

2) In the Avesta *Vivāṇhyant*: the Sanskrit and Avestan terms, going back to *vi vas*, "to shine forth", designates this godhead as the one whose light shines forth.

3) The rule is that before nasals the vowel *a* becomes *ə* or *ɔ* or *i*; as examples of the change involved here we may cite Sanskrit *yam*, "quem", versus Avestan *yim*, Sanskrit *vācam*, "vocem", versus Avestan *vācim*, Sanskrit *sacante*, "sequuntur", versus Avestan *hacintē*, etc.

meaning occurring in the first Veda.⁴ Yama has a sister called Yami (Avestan Yameh), and the two formed the first pair from which mankind originated,⁵ but since this is a myth that has no relevance to the subject of our study we need not dwell upon it.

Coming to the Avesta or the Zoroastrian scriptures, we say that it preserves part of the rich mythology that developed around the person of Yama in the age of Indo-Iranian unity.⁶ According to Indo-Iranian belief, he was the first man, the first to offer the soma sacrifice, the first king, and the first man to die, and the Avesta also narrates how he accomplished spectacular deeds. In the Vidēvdāt⁷ it is recounted how Ahura Mazdāh appointed Yima keeper of all creatures (2:1-7), and when the earth became so replenished "with flocks and herds, with men and dogs and birds and with red blazing fire, that there was no more room for flocks, herds and men", Yima enlarged the earth, a feat that he repeated three times (2:8-20). In this myth Yima appears not only as the first man but also as the author of civilization and culture.

There is also another spectacular achievement Yima is credited with in the same source (2:21-45). Ahura Mazdāh

4) References in H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda* (4th impr., Wiesbaden, 1964) cols. 1096f. The name Yama has been connected with the appellation Ymir (Hymir) borne by a celebrated giant in Germanic mythology, something for which there is no justification.

5) Traces of this myth survive in the first Veda (cf. 10:10) which tells us how the sister tempted the brother to sin, and how the latter opposed the suggestion. It is, however, preserved by the traditions of Iran, though Yima's place is taken, in these traditions, by Gayōmart the mythical first man. For details, cf. R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961) pp. 131-143, etc. (cf. too n. 6).

6) Exhaustive discussions in A. Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens* I-II (Uppsala-Leiden, 1917-34).

7) This title means "law against the daēvas" (Sanskrit devas), i. e., the demons of Iran! The reading *Vendidat*, which was once current, is to be rejected as inaccurate.

once called together a meeting of the celestial gods in Airyana Vaējō⁸ and told Yima, who had naturally come for the great assembly, to get ready a *var-*, "enclosure".⁹ to protect men and animals from a terrible winter that would destroy everything; he was asked to bring into the enclosure "the seeds of men and women, of the greatest, the best and the finest kinds of this earth, of every kind of cattle and of every kind of tree", and there was not to be anything defective. And Yima did as he was commanded: "And there was no hump-backed, none bulged forward there; no impotent, no lunatic; no poverty..." The main thing here is that Yima's enclosure is a sort of terrestrial paradise, which, in Indian sources, is called *yamasadanam*, "Yama's abode".

At the time when Yima was ruling mankind, there flourished the golden age: there was neither heat or cold, neither old age nor death, and father and son looked alike, appearing as though they were both fifty years old! He, the *Urkönig*, the ruler of primeval times, was crowned with *xvarənah*, "royal glory",¹⁰ which he lost when he fell into sin. We wish to point

8) That is, "the Aryan expanse", which is "the first, the best of dwelling places and lands" (vid. I: 2), and with which are associated several happenings of the mythical past. The expressions "appears to have been used both of a mythical land at the centre of the world, and also of wherever the 'Aryas' or Avestan people found themselves living" (M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* [Handbuch der Orientalistik, I. Abt., 8. Bd., I. Abschl., Lief. 2, Heft 2A, Leiden 1975] p. 144).

9) Compare Sanskrit *var-*, "space, place", etc. The Iranian myth of the great winter is reminiscent of the Fimbul winter of the Eddas (or the mythological literature of ancient Iceland); cf. I. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* II (Grundriss der germanischen Philologie 12 2) §§ 593f. (pp. 396-400).

10) This is a technical term that has several different meanings in the Avesta (cf. W. Lenz, "Was ist nun eigentlich das Chwerenah im Aveste?" *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* III [1961] p. 410). Etymologically the base *xvar-* corresponds to Sanskrit *svar-* (cf. *svarnāra-*) cf. Sanskrit *suvar-* (= Avestan *hvar*), "sun, light, heaven", etc.

out that Zarathushtra was hostile to Yima, whom he condemned as the one responsible for the introduction of wicked practices among the people of Iran, but later generations of the prophet's followers reinstated the god. Let us now pass on to the *R̥gveda* and see what it has to say about Yama's kingdom.

The first Veda depicts Yama as the ruler of the world of the dead (10:14:1), and associates with him two dogs, the offspring of Saramā the hound belonging to Indra. The dog was a sacred animal of the Indo-Europeans, who were even wont to use it for magical purposes.¹¹ The dogs could prevent the departed from entering into his realm, so that it was customary to address prayers to them so as to win their favour (7:55:2-4). They were four-eyed, dark-hued, insatiate, with distended nostrils, and running about among men, and the departed spirit used to be asked to outrun the two animals and enter the abode of bliss (10:14:107), but on the whole they seem to have been regarded as benevolent guards of the pathway to heaven who would protect those journeying to Yama's abode (10:14:11 f.).

The kingdom of Yama is a veritable terrestrial paradise where the departed, sitting on grass, enjoy drinking pressed juices (10:15:3); together with him they also partake of the soma banquet (10:15:8). It is said that the ruler is himself seated under a tree (10:135:1), and there is music played by singers (10:135:7). The following words addressed to the dead man admirably sum up the ancient Aryan conception of the life after death:

"Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways...
There shall you look on... Yama.
Meet Yama, meet the Fathers...

11) A. Kammenhuber, "Totenvorschriften und 'Hund-Magie' im Vidēvdāt", *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 108 (1958) pp. 299-307. The Avesta too refers to the four-eyed dogs connected with the departed (Boyce, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

Leave sin and evil, seek anew your dwelling,
And bright with glory wear another body" (10:14:7f.).¹²

To the departed Yama grants "a place to rest in, adorned with days and beams of light and waters" (10:14:9). Life after death is, then, one of enjoyment and bliss.¹³

The question whether the *R̥gveda* does speak of transmigration must be just touched upon here, for this is a cardinal doctrine of the Upaniṣads. We wish to mention the fact that specialists of the calibre of Roth and Geldner claimed to have detected traces of this doctrine in a few passages, but not all are convinced of the accuracy of their exegesis.¹⁴ 10:16:7 states that the departed soul went to the waters and the plants, but to find here the theory of metempsychosis in its initial stages would be preposterous, especially since the Vedic poets hold the view that like returned to like: the eye returned to the sun, the spirit to the wind, and so on (10:16:3).

II

It now remains for us to study closely Zarathushtra's views on man's lot after death, and to be able to understand

12) Cited from R. T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the R̥gveda* (repr., Delhi, 1973). On the new body, cf. Luke, "Terrestrial Realities: the Tradition of the Aryans", *Jeevadhara* (1978) pp. 162f.

13) It is to be recalled here that the idea of hell is not at all central to the religion of the *R̥gveda*, though there are not wanting passages that can be interpreted in terms of *naraka*—or the place where sinners are made to undergo punishment. One passage (4:5:5) notes how those who are full of sin, untrue and unfaithful, have brought into being the most miserable situation; elsewhere it is said that the unintelligent sink down (9:64:21), of course, into hell. In any case, the possibility of perdition remains far removed from the perspectives of the Vedic Aryan. Cf. N. W. Brown, "The Rigvedic Equivalent for Hell", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 61 (1941) pp. 76-84.

14) References in A. B. Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School Entitled Taittiriya Saṁhita* (Harvard Oriental Series 18-19, repr., Delhi, 1967) p. cxxxviii.

his eschatology in its proper perspective we have to bear in mind the fact that he was above all a prophet, one who felt that he had received a special call from God,¹⁵ and that he was the official spokesman of the one who had deigned to call him. He had a profound experience of God, the personal one whom he addressed as Ahura Mazdāh, "the Wise Lord", and whatever he says in the Gāthās¹⁶ is the outcome of his faith in the one whom he had come to know from personal experience. Needless to say, the prophet does not give a systematic exposition of his doctrine of the last things, and so the investigator has to try to synthesize the data scattered here and there in the Gāthās, namely, the overt and covert statements regarding man's future.

Zarathushtra, to begin with, teaches that a person's merits and demerits remain known to God, and the technical term he uses to designate the cumulus of vices and virtues is *irixta-* (Sanskrit *rikṭha-*), "inheritance, legacy, heritage".¹⁷ What we have here is a passive participle of the root *raēk-*, derived from Indo-European *leikw-* and corresponding to Greek *leip-ō*, Latin *lingu-ō*, Sanskrit *riṇakti*, etc., and so *irikta-* can be de-

15) Gāthā 29 deals with Zarathushtra's call to the prophetic office; brief discussion in Luke, "God's Call and the Concept of the 'Man of God' in Extra-Biblical Religions", in T. Thyparampil *Vocation: God's Call to Man* (The National Vocation Service Centre Research Series No. 1, Poona, (1975) pp. 9-15.

16) Text in transcription, with German translation, paraphrase and commentary in H. Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* I-II (Indogermanische Bibliothek. I. Reihe: Lehr- und Handbücher, Heidelberg, 1958-9). Cf. too S. Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra* (Acta Iranica. Encyclopédie permanente des études iraniennes. IIIe série, vol. 1, Leiden, 1975). M. W. Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gathas of Zarathushtra, Together with Text, Translation and Notes* (Language Dissertations Published by the Linguistic Society of America, No. 4, repr., No. 4, repr., New-York, 1966). In the present study the texts are generally cited from J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Hymns of Zarathustra, Being a Translation of the Gāthās together with Introduction and Commentary* (Boston, 1963).

17) H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras nach dem Awesta dargestellt* (repr., Hildetheim, 1971) p. 194, n. 1.

fined as "relictum, reliquum" of man's life here on earth. Here are two passages where the technical term occurs: "He, the holy one who, through the Truth, watches over *irixtəm*" (44:2), namely, of all men; "You, O Ahura Mazdāh, know¹⁸ their (= the impious) *irixtəm*" (32:7). What is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that God knows everything transpiring on the face of this earth?

God recompenses man in accordance with what he has done in this life:

"What deed, overt or covert, will be punished, O Mazdāh,
And who will obtain full pardon for petty wrongs -
All this you see with your own eye, you who watch
over all through the Truth.

These things I ask, O Ahura...

The pledges made to the righteous and those.

O Mazdāh, to the unrighteous,
How shall they be at the final recompense?" (31:13f.).

"Recompense", *hānkərəti*, consisting of the root *han*, "to merit",¹⁹ and a derivative of the base *kar* (cf. Sanskrit *karoti*), "to do/make", points, when there is question of *dāthra-* or reward, to the settling of accounts. What about those who are partially righteous and partially wicked? With him in whom *drag*²⁰ and *asha*²¹-coexist, the judge will deal in an upright manner.

18) In the original *vaēlišhtō*, which is a superlative meaning "der am besten weise, kennt, sich versteht auf" (C. Bartholomea, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* [repr., Berlin, 1961] col. 1321). The base *vēad*, "to know", is a cognate of Sanskrit *vid* (cf. *veda*, Greek *oida*, etc.)

19) Cf. the cognate in Sanskrit *san*, "to gain, acquire", etc. (*sanati*, *sanate*, *sanoti*, *sanute*); to understand the Avestan form it is enough to bear in mind that Aryan *s* will become *h* in Iranian.

20) In the Avesta *drag-*, "lie", is a technical term that may be said to denote evil in its worst form or the principle of evil in all its comprehensiveness, and in Zarathushtra's preaching the refusal to accept his message is itself the lie. Etymologically the word is related to Sanskrit *druha*, "harm, hurt", etc., Old High German *triogan* (= Modern German *trüngen*), "to cheat, deceive", etc. In the religion of the Avesta *drag-* is the antonym of *asha-* (cf. n. 21), and its adherents are called *dragavant-*, *drujant-* (all participial formations in *-vant-*).

21. Avestan *asha-*, derived from an earlier form *arta-*

Mention is made of "those whose evil deeds²² are outweighed by their good deeds" (49:4), the implication here being that the Lord is fully cognizant of their state and will reward them with equity.

Zarathushtra's idea of man's nature is rather complicated: he admits of course the *urvan-*, "soul",²³ and in addition to it there is another principle which he calls *daēna-*, "geistiges Urwesen",²⁴ and both will be recipients of rewards and punishments. "Those united with *asha-* shall make their *daēna-* share in the best reward" (49:9). "In what shall my soul (*mē urvā*) attain good and be glad" (44:8)? God gives well-being or ill-being to the men of all times: "With immortality²⁵ the soul of the righteous one (*ashaona urvā*) is rewarded, but with everlasting torments²⁶ the unrighteous...." (45:7).

(through the change of *-rt-* to *-sh-*; cf. *martya-* = *mashya-*), is a cognate of Sanskrit *ṛta-*, and both the terms must be translated "truth"; the adherent of *asha-* is known as *ashvant-* (participle). In the antithesis between truth and falsehood, which is so basic to the preaching of Zarathushtra, we have a tradition that goes back to the common Indo Iranian heritage, and a survival of it is had in opposition between *ṛta-* and *anṛta-* so clearly attested in the first Veda. In India, however, this antithesis never underwent any significant evolution.

22) In the original *duzhvarshatā*, consisting of the prefix *duzh-* (the voiced form of *dush-*, corresponding to Sanskrit *dus-*, etc.), and the passive participle *varshatā-*, from the base *verəz-*, "to do, work" (compare Gothic *waurkjan*, "to work" cf. too the finite verbal form third person singular *v r zyeiti* = Gothic (*waürkeith*, "worketh"); the prophet is speaking of "wicked works" in opposition to "good works".

23) An important term in the Avesta, with several shades of meaning; it is found only in Iranian.

24. Lommel, *op. cit.*, p. 149 (cf. pp. 150-56).

25. In the original *emərətātī*, the instrumental form of *amərətātī-* (= Sanskrit *amṛtatve-*), "non-death, immortality."

26. That is *utayūtā... sādrā*; Avestan *sādra-*, "pain, torment, woe", goes back to Indo-European *k'ed-*, from among whose derivatives we may mention Greek *kēdō*, "to trouble, distress, vex", Gothic *hatis*, Old Icelandic *hatr*, Anglo-Saxon *hete* (whence "hate"), etc.: cf. too Sanskrit *ri-śādas-*, "Sorge für den Frembling" (J. Wackernagel- A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatic* II/2 [Göttingen, 1954] § 122b, p. 220).

The idea of a particular judgment in the popular Judaeo-Christian sense is alien to the prophet's teaching, though he has preserved a very old mythical tradition of the Aryans concerning the dead man's transit through the bridge of separation which automatically differentiates the good from the wicked. In the younger Avesta it is known as *cinvat pār-atu*, "cinvat bridge", a name that is a modification of the expression used by the reformer, namely *cinvatō pār-atu*, where the first element is the genitive of the participle *cinvant-*, from the base *kāy-*, "to distinguish",²⁷ and the second a noun meaning "passing, transit", created from the root *par-*, "to pass through".²⁸ The wicked, as they approach the bridge, shudder with terror:

"The karapans and the kavis²⁹
Who subjugated to their power mankind....
Shall be tortured by their own soul (*urvā*) and
their own conscience (*daēnā*)
When they come to the bridge of separation,
To be for ever the inmates of the house of the Lie"
(46:11).

The soul and the conscience of the man who strayed from the path of the Truth "shall be afraid at the bridge of separation" (51:13). Zarathushtra finally expresses the hope that he will be

27. From the root *kay-* (= Indo-European *k^{ee}i-*), "to separate"; compare *cayeiti* (= Sanskrit *cayati*), "selects, chooses", and *cinvaiti* (= Sanskrit *cinoti*), id. The original base survives in Greek *poieō*, "to do/make", etc.

28) From Indo-European *per-*, surviving in Greek *peraō*, "to pass through, cross over", Sanskrit *pipartī*, "brings over, surpasses", etc.

29) The term *karapan* probably means "mumbler", and *kavi-* is, of course, the well-known designation in Sanskrit of poets, which, in the traditions of Iran, has also the meaning "chieftain, petty ruler", etc. How the word acquired this particular nuance, it is difficult to say, and, interestingly enough, in the Manichaean sources it attests the meaning "giant", and in the Christian sources in Sogdian, "hero". For details, cf. E. Benveniste, "Etudes sur quelques textes sogdiens chrétiens", *Journal Asiatique* 247 (1959) pp. 115-36 (cf. p. 128).

able to cross the bridge of separation with all those whom he has brought to the true faith: he is then, the leader of the Mazdāh-worshippers who march forward to heaven (46:10).

The adherents of *asha* who pass through the bridge naturally go to paradise while the followers of *drug* will be hurled into hell, the place of punishment which is described in the *Gāthās* with the help of concrete images. "Long-lasting darkness, foul food and wailing" (31:10) will be the lot of the wicked; the reader should note that the word here rendered "food" really means "eating and drinking". Unpalatable unsavoury, impure food will be the stuff with which the souls of the adherents of the Lie will be fed after death (49:11): those who despise the Truth" will receive foul nourishment, and they shall be deprived of bliss" (53:6).³⁰ They dwell in the "house"³¹ of the Lie" (49:11), which is also the region of long-lasting darkness (31:20). Hell is nowhere thought of as a place of torture, though the Pahlavi sources delight very much in giving gruesome descriptions of the pains inflicted on the souls of the wicked by the demons.³² It is remarkable, too, that the *Gāthās* never represent hell as the abode of devils, which is truly surprising when we remember that heaven is visualized as God's abode.

30) "Bliss", *xvāthrəm*, which, in the Sanskrit rendering of the Avesta, is translated *śubham* (Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, col. 1876).

31) "House of Lie". *drujō dēmānē*, where the first element is the technical term *drug-* (cf. n. 20 above) and the second a declensional form of *dēmāna-* (from *dm-āna-*), "house", which has as its variant *nmāna-* (= Sanskrit *māna-*, "building, abode"; cf. Lithuanian *nāmas*, "house") as well.

32) We add here a short specimen: the wicked king must hang in space, flogged by fifty demons; the miser is stretched out upon a rack, and a thousand demons trample upon him; the woman who has slain her own child will be made to dig into a hill with her breast, and to hold a millstone upon her head. As the wicked are thus suffering in hell, Angra Mainyu, the Iranian Lucifer, goes on to mock and ridicule them (from the Pahlavi compilation *Artā Vīrāf* which claims to be the record of a sage's vision of the other world).

Paradise is called the "house of song": as the prophet says, "Let us offer him hymns of praise *dāmānā garō* in the house of song" (45:8).³³ Compare the following: "With the reward that Zarathushtra promised the magvants."³⁴ Ahura Mazda has come long ago to *garō dāmānā* the house of song" (51:15). This house is the Lord's own, and hence the expressions "his house of song" (45:8) and "his house" (45:10): it is called also the blessed dwelling of Vohu Manah,³⁵ Mazda and asha (30:10).

Good food is a peculiarity of paradise, but the meaning intended by this expression is highly spiritual: "Wholesomeness³⁶ and immortality (which are) your (gifts) shall be for (them) nourishment" (34:11).³⁷ These two entities figure elsewhere too together as the reward the Wise Lord gives to the righteous: in a Gāthā containing the questions the reformer asked his God, reference is made to "wholesomeness and immortality" (*haurvātā amərətātā*), and the wish is expressed that they join themselves to the followers of the Truth (44:17): in the same poem the prophet asks God whether he will receive the wages

33) Avestan *gar-*, "praise, laud, song", is a cognate of Sanskrit *gir* ; cf. too the verbal root *gar-*, "to praise" (Sanskrit *grṇāti*, etc.). In the Pahlavi sources the highest heaven is called Garōdmān; cf. P. Guignoux, "L'enfer et paradis d'après sources pehlevies, *Journal Asiatique* 256 (1968) pp. 219-45.

34) What we have here is a participle, "one who belongs to the maga", this latter being a term whose meaning remains obscure; in the passage cited above the word means doubtless the followers of the Truth. For a summary of the various interpretations proposed, cf. G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Die Religionen der Menschheit 14, Stuttgart, 1965) pp. 90-93.

35) That is, "Good Mind" (cf. Sanskrit *manas-*), an entity (hypostasis?) mentioned in the Avesta along with Ahura Mazda.

36) The word in question here is *haurvatāt*-, corresponding exactly to Sanskrit *sarvatat*-, from *sarva-*, "whole, entire, integral"; the Indo-Iranian terms are etymologically related to Latin *salvus* (whence *salvatio*), so that it is fully justified to translate them as "salvation".

37) "Nourishment" *xvarətha-*, from *xvar-*, "to eat, drink, take nourishment".

he has been promised together with wholesomeness and immortality (44:18). Those who show obedience through their works will be in possession of these two blessings (45:51. 47:1).

Paradise is lightsome, luminous: the state of bliss of the just is described as "joy which shall spread through light" (30:1).³⁸ Ahura Mazdāh has himself "filled the blessed spaces with light" (31: 7), and paradise is itself the resplendent *xshathra-*, "kingdom" (43: 16).³⁹ Another synonym is long life: Zarathushtra hopes that he will attain long life (33: 5). The following passage is quite significant: 'According as one desires bliss, may one receive bliss... with the joy of long life all the days' (43:2); the same Gāthā refers to "the long duration of priceless existence" which is the Lord's *xshathra-* or kingdom (43:13). Long life is called "good life": the teacher prays to God to grant him "good life" (33: 10).

The place of light and good life, paradise is at times simply called *vahisht-*, "optimum, the best",⁴⁰ and mention is made of *an̥həus vahishtahya*, "best existence" (44: 2), which, needless to say, stands in opposition to "worst existence", that is, *an̥ghush* to which is added the qualification *acishta-* (30: 4).⁴¹ In a number of passages the superlative *vahisht-* is used absolutely: *vahishtəm thā vahishtā*, "optimum tu optime", i. e., "I pray you, O the best one, for the best" (31: 6). To Zarathushtra and his followers must belong *vispanam vahishtəm*, "the best of everything" (43: 2), for the Lord has himself promised the ashvans *vahishta* (47: 5), "(everything that is) best".

The conviction that in paradise the blessed enjoy the vision of God may be regarded as the sublimest element in

38) "Through light", *raocəbīs*, corresponding exactly to Latin *lucibus*; Iranian *raocah-* (= Sanskrit *rocas-*) means 'light' (cf. the verbal root *raok-*, "to shine"), and goes back to Indo-European *leuk-* (cf. Greek *leukos*, "white, bright, clear").

39) In Sanskrit *kṣātra-*, a term that needs no explanation.

40) Sanskrit *vasiṣṭha-*, the superlative of *vasu-*, whose equivalent in Avestan is *vanghu-*, "good".

41) Superlative of *aka-*; cf. Sanskrit *akam*, "unhappiness pain".

Zarathushtra's preaching. As a matter of fact, the prophet claims that he has, here on earth, seen the Lord as he was engaged in the work of creation: "I saw you (*darʔsəm*)⁴² at the beginning, at the creation of life" (43: 5). He will again see God: "I shall see you (*thwā darʔsānī*) through the Truth and Vohu Manah, as one possessed of knowledge and the throne of lordship" (28: 5). This vision is denied to the wicked in hell: they will be debarred from beholding the Truth (33: 6). And this vision, finally, is communion or fellowship with God, as borne out by the following prayer uttered by the prophet: "Grant to Frashaoshtra, I pray you, O Mazdāh Ahura, communion (*urvāzishtam*)⁴³ with the Truth, and, to me too, in your kingdom" (49: 8). What this vision and communion are going to be like, Zarathushtra does not say, for he knows that they are ineffable, beyond human description.

We must also consider here the reformer's view on the final consummation of history, and as we broach upon the problem we are faced with a number of questions which one cannot answer, for the simple reason that the data furnished by the Gāthās are quite meagre. The prophet speaks of an ordeal by molten metal (30: 7, 32: 7, 51: 9), while elsewhere he regards fire as the instrument of ordeal (31: 3, 19, 34: 4, 46: 7, 47: 6). We are not able to say what exactly is the rôle this ordeal has to play in the consummation of history, though in the Pahlavi sources it is assigned the task of purifying the wicked of all their sins and making them fit for eternal life: the great ordeal thus becomes a prelude to the *apokatastasis* or universal restoration.⁴⁴

Another point on which there is obscurity is the fate of the evil spirit. He will certainly be routed, but as to what

42) From the verbal base *darʔs*, "to see", corresponding to Sanskrit *drś-* (cf. *a-darś-am*).

43) Superlative of *urvās-*; cf. *urvāzā-*, "joy, bliss", etc., which, in the Sanskrit version of the Avesta, is rendered *ānanda-* (Bertholomae, *op. cit.* col. 1545).

44) For details, cf. the works that ex professo deal with the religion of Iran (some of which have been referred to in the present study).

happens to him afterwards, the Gāthās are silent. We may not be far off the mark if we presume that the prophet never bothered to draw all the conclusions that would normally flow from his premises, which is tantamount to saying that he never systematized his teachings.

As the herald of the final consummation there will appear a mysterious personage who in the Gāthās bears the name *saoshyant*-, generally rendered "future saviour, helper". Grammatically speaking the word is a future participle of the verb *sū*-, "to be useful",⁴⁵ and the sense accordingly is "he who in the future will exercise the *sū*-activity", consisting in helping the believers to attain life's supreme goal.⁴⁶ Later tradition, elaborated by the Younger Avesta and the Pahlavi sources, has created a group of saviours, but in the Gāthās the benevolent helper is none other than Zarathushtra *redivivus*. This is clear for example, from the expression *daēna*-of the *saoshyant*-, "religion of the future saviour", occurring in a Gāthā composed shortly after the prophet's death.⁴⁷ In one of his own compositions the reformer prays to God to let him know whether he (Ahura) has power over those who are opposed to the new faith and he makes this request in order that "the future saviour may know what his destiny shall be" (48: 9). In another text whose sense is not altogether clear the prophet promises the protection of the future saviour to those who are the foes of the *daēvas* (45: 11). The *saoshyant* who wields his protection over the followers of the Truth and needs to be instructed about his own destiny can only be Zarathushtra, whose second coming will usher in the consummation. Using Judaeo-Christian terminology, we can say that the final establishment of God's kingdom will be preceded by the second coming of the Messiah.

What the kingdom of God, insofar as it is the final goal of history, will bring about is not the end of the present order of things but its marvellous transformation, which in the Avesta is known as *frashō-kərəti*, a technical term consisting of the

45) Bartholomae, *op. cit.* cols. 1551f.

46) Widengren, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-7.

47) That is, Yasna 53, which has its *Sitz im Leben* in the marriage of the prophet's younger daughter Parucishtā.

adjective *frash-*⁴⁸ and the nominal element *kərəti*, from *kar-* (cf. above). With reference to the goal of life, *frashō kərəti* means "making suitable, fit, ready", and hence also "making new, transforming"; compare the request,

"Give me this sign: the entire remaking of this existence,
That a greater joy may be mine in your
worship and praise.

Through your domination, O Ahura,
You make existence truly renewed..." (34: 6. 15).⁴⁹

It would even seem that this making better of existence is an imminent thing, a transformation that will take place in the prophet's own life time, for he prays: "May we be those that renew this existence" (30: 9). He expected a sudden change in the course of history which would bring about the longed-for end, and this event of the last times is called the final turning point of existence:

"And he ... appoints the best of the good
to him who fulfils his
But the worst of the bad to him who shall not
obey him, / will,
At the last turning point of his existence" (51: 6).⁵⁰

The commencement of the second existence will, then, mean the glorious finale of man's life of struggle, a finale that will coincide with Ahura Mazdāh's apportioning of eternal reward to the just and everlasting misery and suffering to the wicked.

The last point to be discussed here is the problem of the resurrection of the body: if the ultimate goal of history is the transformation of existence, then the body too should share in it, and in Judaeo-Christian terminology this is known as the resurrection. Though later Zoroastrian tradition is quite explicit on the matter, we have to confess that there is no explicit mention

48) Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, col. 1008.

49) "Bring to reality a world fit according to thy will" (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 98).

50) In the original *apəmē anhdush urvāēsē*, "at the last turning-point of the world" (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 150).

of the doctrine in the Gāthās, which will doubtless mean that Zarathushtra has not bothered to highlight all the virtualities and nuances of his religious thought. "So können wir sagen, dass in den Gāthās die *Grundlagen* vorhanden sind, aus denen sich die *Folgerung* von einer Auferstehung der Toten ableiten liess".⁵¹

.....

We shall now recapitulate Zarathushtra's idea of the aftermath of death and its presuppositions. 1) There is a retribution after deathbliss for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. 2) Bliss is visualized as long (eternal) life, life in paradise, vision of God, and communion with God. This conception of death's aftermath rests upon two presuppositions, presuppositions which should be quite clear to the Judaeo-Christian believer: 1) God is a personal being, the creator of man, and the lord and master of history, who directs the historical process to the ultimate goal he has himself fixed. 2) Man is free⁵², and is bound to exercise his freedom by choosing the right thing and by rejecting whatever is opposed to it.

The Iranian prophet's religious teaching can best be termed ethical monotheism⁵³, and it is certainly one of the noblest products of the Aryan religious genius. No religious thinker in

51) Franz König (Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna), *Christus und die Religionen der Erde* II (Vienna, 1951) p. 654.

52) On this point, cf. Luke, "The Tragedy of Freedom: Man in the Thought of Zarathushtra", *Jeevadhara* 5 (1975) pp. 148-62.

53) "... in the Gāthās we meet with a *pure monotheism* that not only has the stamp of a profoundly experienced revelation but also gives the impression of having been deeply thought out" (Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 50; cf. 51, where reservations are expressed about the qualification "ethical"). For a different view, cf. H. S. Nyberg. *Die Religionen des alten Iran* (Mitteilungen der vorderasiatisch-ägyptischen Gesellschaft 43, repr., Osnabrück, 1966) pp. 264-67, *passim*.

ancient India ever arrived at the idea of ethical monotheism⁵⁴, the reasons for which need not be investigated here. Zarathushtra's emphasis on freedom – his conviction that man by exercising his freedom of choice can attain authentic existence – gives his thought a modern timbre. His message, as Zaehner has observed (of course, with reference to the West), "may serve as some slight corrective to the modern tendency to turn to a bastard form of Buddhism or Vedantism, imperfectly understood, in order to shirk the responsibilities that living in this world imposes upon us".⁵⁵

The themes we have outlined above have much in common with the doctrines of Judaism and Christianity, but the points of convergence should not make us oblivious of the points of divergence, which too must be indicated here briefly. First of all Zarathushtra visualizes man as the free agent who is able to make the proper choice, and as he does so he parts ways with the Judaeo-Christian tradition which has always been vocal in affirming the paradoxical nature of freedom: through misuse of freedom man falls into sin, and the only way out of this tragic situation is God's redemptive grace. Secondly, the idea of universal sin is alien to the teaching of the Iranian prophet; he would be the last man to endorse the following words uttered by an anonymous Sumerian writer: "Never was a sinless child born to its mother!"⁵⁶ Finally the thought of redemptive grace has no place in Zarathushtra's religion. Whereas biblical man is the free agent who exercises his freedom by confessing his sinfulness and by putting all his trust in God's gratuitous favour, Gāthic man, by the sheer power of his free will, makes the right choice and reaches the final goal of life.

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54) The Bombay Parsi scholar Jahangir Tavdia, comparing the first Veda with the Gāthās, writes: "Hinter dem Rigveda der eng verwandten Stämme stehen sie (die Gāthās) zwar dem Umfang nach und Vielseitigkeit nach weit zurück, sind ihm aber ihrem Kern nach, d. h. im religiösen Gehalt, weit überlegen" ("Zur Interpretation der Gatha des Zarathustra". *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 100 [1950] p. 208).

55) *Op. cit.*, p. 16f.

56) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. Supplement* (Princeton, 1968) p. 590.

Death and Resurrection in the Jewish Apocalyptic

The Apocalyptic is a literary genre of late Judaism that saw the light of day in the span of time between 200 B. C. and 200 A. D.¹ As the designation of a genre, the term denotes any writing that purports to contain a revelation of God concerning the events of the last times, though occasionally it may also contain references to the events of the past such as creation, man's fall, etc., or even to the realities of the present, such as the stars, their movements, etc. By the expression "events of the last times" we mean the end of history and the establishment of God's rule, but these events will be accompanied by the appearance of the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. We begin our discussions with a brief survey of the OT background of Jewish Apocalyptic.

I. The Old Testament background

According to Hebrew thought man is a unity, without any dichotomy between soul and body, whose dissolution at the time of death means the end of man as we know him. A man's *ne fesh*, "self", departs at the moment of death, and what is left behind has no life. The Hebrews believed that the dead continued to exist as shades in a subterranean region called Sheol. "Shades" renders the Hebrew word *refā'im*, a word that does not mean ghosts in the ordinary sense: what it denotes is the dead, inasmuch as they are weaklings,² without any possibility of exercising the normal activities a living man is able to

1) The dates given here are approximate; other dates have also been assigned (e. g., 200 B. C. - 100 A. D.; 175 B. C. - 150 A. D.). The age is also known as the intertestamental period. Cf. M. J. Cantley, "Introduction to apocalyptic", *The Bible Today* (1963) pp. 500-4.

2) The root from which the designation is derived means "to sink down, become weak"; the *refā'im* are therefore the sunken (weak) ones.

accomplish. The greatest misfortune of the shades in Sheol was that they were not able to sing the divine praises (Is. 38:18f).

The etymology of the word Sheol is not clear. It is said to be situated beneath the surface of the earth (Ps. 139:8. Is. 7:11), or beneath the great cosmic ocean that surrounds the earth (Job 26:5. Jon. 2:3ff.). Once men descend into Sheol at the time of death, they will not be able to return thence (2 Sam. 12:23. Job 7:9). It is also a place of forgetfulness, darkness, despair and destitution (Och. 9:5,10). The greatest blessing an Israelite could ever think of was deliverance from Sheol (Ps. 30:4. 86:13).

There is no moral distinction in Sheol, and all alike - rich and poor, king and commoner, good and wicked - go there. Though such a gloomy conception of Sheol was prevalent in ancient Israel, the ground was nonetheless being prepared for the emergence of the idea of a life after death. The popular notions about the shades' life began gradually to change, and we find poets expressing the firm conviction that their fellowship with God will continue even beyond the boundaries of this life (Ps. 16:7-11. 49:16).³

Belief in the resurrection of the dead also comes to expression in the OT. Resurrection can be understood either as the restoration of the dead to the conditions of earthly life, or as the conferring of a different and new form of life upon the dead. It is the second variety of resurrection that is the object of biblical faith. The texts dealing with the resurrection in the OT are all from a very late period in history, and the historical circumstance marking the beginning of this expectation are not known to us. It may well have arisen because of the martyrdom of certain righteous people in Israel. The justice of God demands that those who suffered martyrdom should continue to enjoy fellowship with him, and for this the dead would have to be brought back from Sheol and be made to join the living in praising God in his kingdom.

3) Cf. D. S. Russel, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, 1964) p. 356.

In the OT the resurrection of the dead was not understood as personal immortality. The future hope expressed in the OT was not in terms of individual destiny, but rather in terms of God's solicitude for the nation of Israel as a whole. Israel would share in the untold blessings of the kingdom to be established by God on the face of this earth, of course, in his own good time.⁴ There were also pious people who believed that not only the nation but also the individual would share in the resurrection. But this idea came to the forefront only with the apocalyptic tradition.

The earliest reference to the resurrection occurs in the so-called Apocalypse of Isaiah (Is. 24-27).⁵ The relevant text runs thus:

The dead shall live, their bodies shall rise,
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy due is a due of light,
And in the land of the shades
Thou wilt let it fall" (Is. 26: 19).

Another passage that belongs here is Dan. 12: 2-3: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt..." The historical background of this text is to be noted carefully. The book of Daniel was written about 165 B. C. when the persecution unleashed by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Ephiphanes was raging. Many faithful Jews were done to death for no reason at all. The author was convinced that together with the living the martyrs would also share in the glories of the imminent kingdom. Both in Isaiah and Daniel we see the belief that the righteous man's fellowship with God cannot be destroyed by death.

4) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

5) These chapters which are a late addition to the book of Isaiah, make use of apocalyptic and eschatological themes such as universal judgment, signs in the heaven pointing to the end, the eschatological banquet, etc. The exact date of origin of the present apocalypse is not clear.

II. Developments in apocalyptic literature

The OT conception of Sheol underwent a radical change during the intertestamental period. The conservative wing of Judaism was still holding on to the traditional belief even after the second century B. C. (1 Enoch 102:6-8.11. 2 Baruch 10:6-12:4). In apocalyptic literature the dead are no more shades but souls or spirits, and were thought of as surviving conscious, individual beings.⁶ Some of the books⁷ use the word soul, while others⁸ prefer spirit, and still others⁹ employ both the terms as synonyms. We also find a curious phrase in 1 Enoch 22:3 which speaks of "the spirits of the souls of the dead." What we have in Apocalyptic is not merely a change of name from shade to soul or spirit but rather a profound transformation of the Jews' idea of death and the nature of the survival after death. In the OT death meant the end of personal existence, but the apocalyptists believe in individual consciousness and personal existence after death.¹⁰ There is a clear continuity between life on earth and life after death, and the departed can experience the fellowship with God even in the grave.

Moral distinctions are seen in the apocalyptic conception of Sheol. As in life, in death too men are categorized into the wicked and the good, on the basis of moral judgment.¹¹ A man's destiny depends on the life he has led on this earth, and this destiny determined the moment he passes from this life. According to 2 Enoch repentance is not possible after death (62: 2).

1 Enoch includes various conceptions of Sheol. Chapter 22 gives a very detailed account of it.¹² For the author Sheol is

6) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

7) For example, the Similitudes of Henoch, The Psalms of Solomon, 2 Enoch, 2 Baruch, etc.

8) For instance, The Noachic Fragments of Enoch, 1 Enoch, The Assumption of Moses, etc.

9) Thus 1 Enoch (in several sections) and 2 Esdras.

10) Compare (1 Enoch 22:7. Assumption of Moses 13:6; 31:4; 32:4, etc.

11) Russel, *op. cit.* p. 360.

12) R. H. Charles, *The Apocryphe and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament II* (Oxford, 1969) p. 202.

not in the underworld but in the far West, as the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Egyptians believed. In all other sections of the book the traditional Hebrew view is attested. The moral distinction is very clear in the present book (22:51. 51:1. 63:10. 102:5).

In most apocalyptic writings Sheol is visualized as an intermediate state where the souls of the departed await the resurrection and final judgment, where they receive punishment or reward (4 Ezra 7:75). With the final judgment the wicked and the righteous go to their respective destinies, the former to suffering and the latter to bliss. Sheol is not only an intermediate state but also the place of judgment, particularly for the souls of the wicked. In Sheol "the wicked shall have no hope of life" (1 Enoch 98:14); they are destined for the day of destruction (98:10).

Some of the apocalyptic texts speak of the different chambers or compartments of Sheol corresponding to the moral distinction of the souls who go there. In 1 Enoch 22 there is a division of Sheol into four compartments, called "hollow-places" (22:9-13).¹³ The first division is meant for "the spirits of the righteous" (22:9). The second division is set apart for those sinners who lived well in this life and had an honourable burial: "Here their spirits shall be set apart in great pain till the great day of judgment" (22:10f.). The third compartment is destined for sinners who have suffered in this life and therefore incur less penalty in Sheol (22:12), and the fourth for the sinners who have already received punishment in the present life (22:13).

1 Enoch 22:9-13 puts before us, for the first time in apocalyptic literature, the picture of hell, though it does not use the word hell. Sinners in the second compartment are kept there for further punishment "in the accursed valley" (27:1), i. e., Gehenna.¹⁴ In due course, owing to the restriction of the

13) For a discussion of the text, cf. Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

14) This is a Hebrew word that literally means "Valley of Hinnom"; the form in Hebrew is *Gē'hinnōm* (in the Targum *Gē'hinnām*), and the place thus called is a ravine south of Jerusalem, into which all the impurities of the city used to be

resurrection exclusively to the righteous. Sheol came to mean hell or Gehenna, and it was thought of as the preliminary or even permanent abode of the wicked (1 Enoch 63:10. 99:11). In other words, Gehenna/Sheol is the place of punishment in the after life, where the wicked suffer excruciating pains. In some passages the place of punishment is identified with Sheol itself or some part of Sheol (1 Enoch 51:1. 54:1. 56:7. 63:10. 90:26f. Psalms of Solomon 14:6. 2 Enoch 10:1ff. etc.). Sometimes it is pictured as the place of endless torment which follows the last judgment (1 Enoch 48:9. 2 Baruch 85:12f. etc.) At times we hear about the slaying spirit in Sheol or Gehenna. "Woe to you who spread evil to your neighbours, for you shall be slain in Sheol" (1 Ench 99:11). This is the worst or extreme penalty for sin. Condemnation to Sheol is a less severe punishment than the slaying of the soul there, and the counterpart of this idea of punishment is the hope of the resurrection.

III. The resurrection in apocalyptic literature

The apocalyptists in general express their hope of the resurrection, and in their writings we find three different views on it: 1) all Israelites will rise again (Dan. 12:2. 1 Enoch 1-36 [with the exception of 22:13]. 37-70. 83-90. 2 Baruch 50-51); 2) only the righteous Israelites are destined to rise again (Is. 25:8. 26:19. 1 Enoch 91-94. 2 Baruch 30); 3) all mankind will rise again (4 Ezra 7:32. 37:12. Testaments of the Patriarchs, Benjamin, 10:6-8).¹⁵ From their writings it is clear that the apocalyptists contemplated a resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked. Five books clearly attest belief in a general resurrection affecting all men without exception, but sometimes it is restricted to the righteous.¹⁶

dumped. The OT at times speaks of "the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom" (Jos. 15:8. 18:16. Jer. 7:32. 2 Chr. 28:3; cf. too Neh. 11:30. 2 Kg. 23:10) and late Jewish tradition came to look upon the place as the scene of the final judgment, and even as hell.

15) Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

16) Cf. The Testaments of the Patriarchs, Judah 25:1ff. and Benjamin 10:6; The Sybilline Oracles 4:181:3; Apocalypse of Moes 28:4, 41:2; 2 Esdras 7:37; 2 Baruch 42:7, 50:2 etc.

A few books do not make any reference to the resurrection but admit some other form of survival. The Book of Jubilees teach not the resurrection of the body but the immortality of the soul: "And their bones will rest in the earth, and their spirits will have much joy" (23:31). This idea arose under the influence of Hellenistic thought, and it is not a general teaching of the apocalyptists. It is not the soul's immortality but the body's resurrection that is typical of the apocalyptic hope.

How did the apocalyptists conceive of the resurrection of the body? They believed that survival after death could not be expressed exclusively in terms of the soul or spirit, without any reference to the body.¹⁷ As we have already seen, the souls in Sheol were living as individual, conscious beings, though apart from their bodies. As truncated personalities, they were waiting for the union with the body, and only in this union could their survival after death be fully expressed.

Participation in the kingdom of God is possible only when one possesses his full personality. The *raison d'être* of the resurrection of the dead is that the righteous have to share in the coming kingdom.¹⁸ If the kingdom is visualized as an earthly one, one must rise with the physical body, but if it is thought of as a spiritual one, then one must rise with a spiritual body. Both these views are seen in the apocalyptic writings. In the Sybilline Oracles we read, "God himself shall fashion the bones and ashes of men, and raise up mortals once more as they were before (their death)" (4:181f.). 2 Baruch expects the resurrection of the physical body: the earth which has preserved the bodies of the dead for the resurrection to come "shall make no change in their form, but as it has received, so shall it restore them" (50:2). When the dead are raised up, the living are able to recognize them as men who had died and have now come back (50:3f.).

In some of the apocalyptic books the kingdom is described in supramundane terms, and naturally in such a kingdom the physical body has no place: there is need of a spiritual body that will correspond to the heavenly environment (1 Enoch 37-71).

17) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

18) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

Sometimes these spiritual bodies are called garments of light (2 Esdras 2:39, 45) or garments of glory (1 Enoch 62:15). The Similitudes on Enoch give a mixed picture of the kingdom set up in a new heaven (45:4, 51:4) and a new earth (41:2, 45:5). According to 2 Baruch the souls of the righteous dead are raised from the dust of the earth with their physical bodies, without any change in their appearance (50:2). After the judgment there takes place a gradual transformation until the physical bodies are changed into spiritual ones (51:1ff. cf. too 2 Enoch 22:8f.).¹⁹ The state of the righteous who have risen from the dead is described thus in 2 Baruch: "They live in the heights of the invisible world, and their glory is more than that of the angels. They shall be changed into every form they desire, from beauty into loveliness, and from light into the splendour of glory" (51:10).²⁰

Though the physical and spiritual bodies are different, there is a curious connection between them. 2 Enoch gives details about the spiritual body of Enoch: it is like those of the angels and needs no food and drink or anything for earthly satisfaction (56:2). However, when he visits them for a month, he is easily recognized by his friends, though his face had to be frozen so that men could look at it (37:2). He also allows the whole assembly of men to approach him and kiss him (64:2f.).

We may, then, conclude that the spiritual body has properties different from those of the physical one, and though there is no organic relationship between them, the spiritual body shares with the physical one the same structure. However spiritualized the risen body may be, it is still the body which has nothing in common with the discarnate or disembodied spirit.²¹ It is the good deeds performed by men here on earth that condition the fashioning of the new body, the transformation of the physical body into a spiritual one. This belief is expressed explicitly in the Christian apocalyptic writings and implicitly

19) Russel, *Between the Testaments* (London, 1960) p. 161.

20) The account of the transformation of the risen body in 2 Baruch 49-51 finds a striking parallel in 1 Cor. 15; Paul even mentions the transformation of the living (1 Cor. 15:51).

21) Russel, *The Methods and Message*, p. 379.

in the Jewish ones.²² God created man "from invisible and from visible nature, of both are his death and life" (2 Enoch 30:10).

IV. The last judgment in apocalyptic literature

The apocalyptists frequently speak of the resurrection for judgment. But still there is no necessary connection between the two.²³ The idea of judgment is not of apocalyptic origin. It is taken over from prophecy where it was connected with the day of Yahweh. Nonetheless there is a development of thought regarding judgment in apocalyptic literature.

The concept of judgment varies in the different works of the apocalyptic genre. The author of 1 Enoch conceives of a first world judgment (54:7-10) and of a final one at the beginning of the messianic kingdom; this latter takes place over Azazel the demon and his hosts (54:6. 55:4), over the fallen stars, the shepherds and the blinded sheep (90:20-27). It is referred to as "the great day" (22:11. 54:6), "the great judgment" (10:6. 16:1. 19:1), and "the judgment that is for ever and ever" (10:12). The same work also speaks of the judgment of the sword at the beginning of the kingdom when the righteous will destroy the wicked (50:2. 90:19. 91:12. 95:7 etc.). Sometimes the final judgment is seen as taking place at the close of the messianic kingdom (94:9 98:10. 103:8 etc.). Some of these ideas are combined together (1 Enoch 48:8-10. 99:9.15).

The judgment is at times said to affect the whole of mankind, and at other times it is envisaged as affecting the gentiles as distinct from the Jews; sometimes only individuals come forward to receive reward or punishment, and at other times the living, or the souls of the dead, are judged; sometimes God himself executes judgment (2 Esdras 7:33), and at other times he judges through a vicegerent, the Messiah, the Elect One, the Son of Man. This judgment has an ethical character

22) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

23) Russel, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

and is universal in scope: the righteous and the wicked, the elect and the sinners, are judged according to their respective deeds.

Later apocalyptic works make mention of the individual judgment. In the Testament of Abraham every man is said to be judged on the basis of what he has done or left undone on the face of this earth; the souls of the departed have to undergo two judgments, one by fire and the other by the balance in which deeds are weighed (12:13). The same book teaches that some souls need purification and that they can be saved by the prayers of the righteous. For the author of 2 Esdras "the day of judgment is decisive" and is predestined by God (7:70). After death repentance is impossible and prayers for the dead are of no avail; each man is judged on his own merits, and each is responsible for his salvation. The idea of final judgment, of course, takes for granted God's supremacy over the universe.²⁴

.....

In the rear of the apocalyptic expectations outlined above there lies the belief that God is supremely good and would not allow his people to perish at the hands of their foes. Even after death the people of God will be granted fellowship with him, a fellowship that is understandable only on the assumption that man remains whole and entire even after death. Faith in the resurrection of the dead means that man remains what he is and continues to enjoy, even beyond the grave, communion with God.

Jesus in his preaching followed the apocalyptic tradition, which furnished him with a set of words and images which his hearers could easily grasp. Resurrection and the life of bliss, truths which belong to the very core of the Judaeo-Christian faith, were first formulated by the apocalyptists, who can, there-

24) In our study we have not touched upon the question whether intertestamental Judaism got its ideas of the last things from alien sources (e. g., the traditions of Persia); the problem does not in anyway affect the purpose of this paper, and besides it is too complicated to be discussed here.

fore, be very well regarded as forerunners of Christ: after all, their activity was part of the history of God's people.

The message the apocalyptic conveys is one of consolation and hope, and even though mythical categories are used to convey it, it will ever remain valid and relevant. The message we get from the apocalyptic notions of death, Sheol, resurrection and judgment is one of optimism. God, the lord and master of history, will not abandon us in our sufferings and hardships but will bring us close to him through them. Even death is not something insurmountable: there is the resurrection, the assurance of which, as far as the Christian believer is concerned, is Christ's own resurrection from the dead.

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The Victory over Death

St. Paul's thought on the aftermath of death achieves its full development in 1 Cor. 15. In the Corinthian community there were some who, under the influence of Gnostic and Platonic tendencies, denied the resurrection of the body.¹ Many others were confused about the condition of their departed ones. The gospel (v. 2) which Paul had preached to them had lost its full significance for them, and the future of the Church at Corinth was in danger. It is in this context that Paul put down his thoughts about the last things. His chief concern is not to clarify by well reasoned arguments the "how" of the existence after death (v. 36), but rather to show the intrinsic connection between the bodily resurrection of Jesus and our own bodily resurrection. This article is an attempt to synthesize the various elements of his thought.

The fact of the Christian's resurrection

The Apostle starts with the credal formula (vv. 3-5). It is intended not merely as an external foundation for his argument; for him faith is what determines the future.² The resurrection of the dead is so closely related to faith in Jesus' resurrection. In fact, the whole content of his preaching has been that the resurrection and salvation of the believer have now become a fact through Christ (v. 22), for death has been conquered by Christ, and the Christian will share in his Saviour's victory over death. But this is not to say that death has been completely wiped out of existence; death is still a reality. It affects us, totally destroying even the spiritual part of our personality.³

1. The Gnostics and Platonists considered the body evil, a prison, from which the soul achieves its liberation at death. To them the resurrection of the body implied the denial of this liberation.

2. H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London, 1969) p. 187.

3. "The spirit of a person is what dies most" (Leo Bekker, as cited in P. Schoonenberg, "I Believe in Eternal Life", *Concilium* [1969] p. 52).

Death has lost none of its radicality as far as historical and biological existence is concerned. Yet, it has ceased to be an effective enemy, and it now stands in a different relation to the believer; it has become an instrument of salvation in the hands of God.⁴ Paul, therefore, is free from any fear in the face of death (vv. 30ff.) To die, for him, is gain (Phil. 1: 21), and he is only eager to die so that he may be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5: 8). But the conquest of death is completed only when all Christians have been raised from death. It is something that lies in the future. But Paul speaks of it in the present tense, the present tense of certainty: "Death is destroyed as the last enemy" (v. 26).⁵ He sees the resurrection of the believer as a fact guaranteed by Christ's victory over death. He tries to convince the Corinthian sceptics of it by different arguments. Far from being proofs for the resurrection of the dead, these are but an earnest invitation to see the self-evident nature of faith itself.

According to some authors, there is a possibility that what the Corinthians denied was the futurity of the resurrection. They probably took the eschatological condition to have already been fulfilled.⁶ Hymenaeus and Philetus, two heretics, who lived at the time of Paul, taught that the resurrection was an already realized fact, leaving no room for a future resurrection after death.⁷ Certainly, Paul too believed that Christians had been raised with Christ (cf. Rom. 6: 5-8, 2 Cor. 5: 15, Gal. 2: 19f. etc.), but the "already", of this realized eschatology is qualified by a "not yet" in Paul's thought, so that the resurrection is an event of the future, a victory over death (v. 26). The denial of the futurity of the resurrection amounts to the denial of the resur-

4. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul* (Freiburg, 1959) p. 126. X. Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London, 1967) p. 97. A. Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesus* (2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1956) p. 443.

5. A. Robertson-A. Plummer, *1 Corinthians* (The International Critical Commentary, 2nd ed., Edinburg, 1914) p. 356. Compare 2 Tim. 1:10, where the past tense is used.

6. C. K. Barret, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Black's NT commentaries, 2nd ed., London, 1971) p. 347.

7. J. A. Steinmueller-C. Sullivan, *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia-New Testament* (New York, 1949) p. 323.

rection itself, and Paul proves this position to be untenable by showing that it leads to impossible conclusions. To deny the resurrection of the dead will be to deny the resurrection of Christ (v. 13), a fact that has been established as uncontrovertible by the unanimous testimony of the apostles (vv. 5-7). But if it were to be true that Christ was not raised from the dead, it would imply that the Apostles had attributed falsehood to God, for they have testified that God raised up Jesus (v. 15), and their message would merely be a myth created by human mind while they proclaimed it to be God's word. They will be, then, guilty of serious perjury and calumny against God. Certainly, they would never do such an action, knowing that it would bring upon them terrible punishments. Then he tells the Corinthians, who were proud of their Christian faith, what a denial of the resurrection would mean for them: their faith would be empty, *kenē* (v. 14), "wanting in reality", and futile, *mataia* (v. 17), "wanting in result", here, "unable to secure forgiveness".⁸ For, faith is dependent upon proclamation and, when the proclamation itself is devoid of content - the resurrection of Christ - faith will lose all its meaning and power. "No one can give himself to a dead man; neither can one expect anything or receive anything from a dead man".⁹ As a consequence they will still be bound in slavery to sin (v. 17), and their relationship to God will be only through sin which will bring the judgment of condemnation upon them. Freedom from sin, which alone can save them from such a judgment, can enable them to receive life from Christ. But if Christ himself is dead, then there is no freedom from sin, neither is there a life from Christ. Those dead in Christ will only be all the more definitively dead (v. 18). Then there is only "this life", and what Christians receive from Christ is merely a hope which will never be fulfilled. This hope can only make Christians "the most to be pitied" (v. 19), for they will lose both their enjoyment of this life and the future they look forward to.¹⁰ Certainly the Corinthians would not like to think that their faith is futile, the forgiveness of their sins a delusion and their hope nothing more than an illusion.

8. Robertson-Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 349

9. Schlatter, *op. cit.*, p. 405

10. Schlatter, *op. cit.*, p. 406

Then he turns to find in one of their own customs an argument for the resurrection of the dead. It appears that there was a strange practice at Corinth of vicarious baptism. When a catechumen died without baptism, a relative or friend of his was baptized on his behalf.¹¹ Perhaps, this practice was bound up with the magical view of baptismal immersion. It was, probably, thought to be so effective that the immersion of a body was all that was required to release the power of baptism. The immersion of a living body could then produce the baptismal effects upon a deceased catechumen. According to Fr. Prat, "it was a solemn protestation that the deceased belonged to Christ and that he had lacked the requisite time and not the desire to become an effective member of the Church".¹² Whether Paul approved of this practice or not is not clear. Evidently, he did not actively promote this custom. What he wants to impress upon the Corinthians is that this practice is a proclamation of faith in the resurrection. He is using an *ad hominem* argument to tell the Corinthians that; while they deny it intellectually, they, by this custom, do in fact prove the resurrection of the dead, for, if there is no resurrection from the dead, there is no sense in this practice.

The Apostle's own conduct is a glowing testimony to the resurrection. In the course of his ministry he had encountered innumerable hardships so much so that he could say that he died every day (v. 3i). The statement that he fought with beasts at Ephesus (v. 32) is, probably, intended to be taken in the metaphorical sense.¹³ Nevertheless, it points to the gravity of the danger and hardship which nearly brought him to death. He is totally free of the fear of death, and wants that the Corinthians

11. F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul* I (London, 1933) p. 136. Barret, *op. cit.*, p. 364

12. Prat, *op. cit.*, p. 137

13. There is little possibility that one could emerge alive from an encounter with wild beasts. Being a Roman citizen, Paul could not be compelled to fight wild beasts. If it had taken place at all Paul could not have failed to mention his miraculous escape. Neither would Luke, if he had heard of it, have left it unmentioned in Acts. Cf. Barret, *op. cit.*, p. 366. Robertson-Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

should take this fear-free attitude to death and suffering as a model. If there is no resurrection of the dead, all these would be foolish. Only Christian hope can make sense of it. Or else, the Epicurian maxim will be the wisest thing to follow (v. 32).

The most positive proof he adduces for the resurrection is the Christian's solidarity with Christ. He has been raised, "the first fruits" of those who have died (v. 20). The first fruits are a pledge and foreshadowing of the whole crop.¹⁴ There are no first fruits without the harvest which follows, and this harvest is also of the same nature as the first fruits, though, not necessarily, of the same quality. The resurrection of Christ, who is seen by Paul as the first fruits, also announces the resurrection of all who are one with him. This image is based on Paul's conception of Christ's relationship to the believers (vv. 21f., 45-49). Christ is the last Adam and stands in the same relationship to the Christians as the first Adam to mankind. The phrases "in Christ" and "in Adam" (v. 22) indicate the believer's solidarity with Christ and Adam.¹⁵ While the implication of solidarity with Adam is death, that of solidarity with Christ is life. The word "all" that is used with Christ has not the same meaning as the "all" that is used with Adam. While in the second case it denotes all men, in the first case it stands not for all men but for those who through faith are in Christ.¹⁶ "It is in Adam that all men die." This is to be understood in the light of Rom. 5:12. Adam's sin, by which he came under the sway of death, introduced man, who is in solidarity with him, into a situation of sin where he sinned and earned death as wages. There is no causal connection between Adam and death.¹⁷ In the same way all those who are in solidarity with Christ, who has been raised by the Father, shall also be raised through their faith (2 Cor. 4:14). Since we are all one, what the Father did to Christ, he will do to us also. This is something that he owes to himself.

14. Part *op. cit.*, p. 135. It is not certain that Paul is alluding to the offering of the first sheaf of harvest. On this, cf. Barret, *op. cit.*, 351. But this does not affect the general sense of the verse.

15. Robertson-Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

16. Barret, *op. cit.*, pp. 351 f. Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

17. Barret, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

Because of this Christ is truly another "Adam". Just as Adam stands at the head of creation as the beginner of life, so Jesus, the last Adam, stands at the head of the new creation as the beginner and giver of life (v. 45).¹⁸

The cause of the resurrection

The expression "life-giving spirit" in v. 45 is not to be taken in terms of causality in the Thomistic sense. But this has been the traditional understanding. We might say that the use of concepts like "meritorious causality" and "exemplary causality" etc. arose out of a need to fit the biblical thought into a system. This is not to say that these concepts have no merit at all in helping us to understand the relation between Christ's resurrection and ours. But they do not express what probably was in Paul's mind, though they express the close connection between them, for, this connection is not one of causality. Paul does not derive his understanding of the resurrection of the dead as an inference from the resurrection of Christ. On the contrary, he interprets his experience of Christ against the background of his faith in the general resurrection.¹⁹ Christ's resurrection is an instance of the resurrection of the dead (v. 13). But it has a special significance: it is a "case in point" which proves that we also will be raised up by the Father. It is the Father who is the cause of the resurrection. Except in a few cases, Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ in the passive. The expression "the raiser of Jesus" is used by Paul as almost a synonym for God (Rom. 8:11).²⁰ In the light of this, and in the context of biblical thought,²¹ where the spirit is thought of as creative, the expression "life-giving spirit" does not imply

18. Schlatter, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

19. W. Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (London, 1976) p. 154.

20. G. Friedrich, "The Meaning of Jesus Being Raised," *Theology Digest* 21 (1973) p. 13.

21. The Bible generally considers the spirit not only as alive but as life-giving in contrast to the physical body which is only alive. This shows the superiority of the spirit. In 1 Cor. 15:45 Paul's concern is not to describe the quality of Christ's risen body but rather to show the superiority of the spiritual body over the natural one. Cf. Barret, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

causality. It merely signifies that at his resurrection Jesus became a spirit possessing a dynamic quality, which every one, who will be raised after him, will share.²² Neither can the Adam-Christ typology of verses 21f. be taken in the sense of causality. Death does not follow naturally from Adam; he is not the cause for the existence of death in the world. "Death came into the world through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Neither does Christ's resurrection automatically cause the resurrection of the dead; faith is an essential condition for the resurrection. The relationship of parallelism between both could, perhaps, be expressed thus: as Adam died, so all men, who are united to him through sin, die; as Christ rose, so all men, who are in Christ through faith, rise.²³

The nature of the resurrection

The resurrection is a mystery, and Paul does not say much about its nature. Nevertheless, he tries to understand it by relating it to the faith which determines it, and to the conception of man which underlies his thinking.

Faith, *pistis*, is not understood by Paul in psychological terms as an attitude of mind but in its connection with the kerygma of the eschatological event of the death and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:23-35, 15:20).²⁴ In the death and resurrection of Jesus, God reveals himself eschatologically as the one whose power extends beyond life and death. The faith, which is born of this kerygma and which determines the resurrection, is eschatologically qualified. The resurrection of the dead, therefore, is eschatological. It is an event of the eschatological times, of which Christ is the beginner (v. 45). It is a participation in the "end" of God's cosmic plan of salvation when Christ will bring to a triumphant conclusion the work that is assigned to him of establishing God's sovereignty over every rebellious power. He will, then, hand over his

22. L. Audet, "What is the Risen Spiritual Body?" *Theology Digest* 21 (1973) p. 6.

23. Audet, *ibid.*

24. Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

kingdom and authority to God the Father who will then be "all in all" (v. 24). In other words, the individual's resurrection is the verification in his case of this plan of salvation. The resurrection of a person, therefore, is a movement towards the complete victory of Christ over his enemies (v. 25). The last enemy to be conquered is death²⁵. This is achieved when all Christians have been raised. The resurrection from the dead, then, is a participation in the eschatological victory of Christ over all his enemies. It is also a participation in God's glory (v. 43). Glory in the Bible is a complex theological concept with several meanings. Its meaning in the NT is influenced by Jewish apocalypticism, and it is understood as the characteristic of the eschatological times, when God will establish his dominion over all history and reveal himself in majesty and power.²⁶ The risen person is said to be like the "heavenly" man, the new man of the eschatological times; instead of a body made out of the dust, he will have a body from heaven (vv. 47f.). This is an eschatological characterization meaning that the person will belong to the eschatological times.

But what is the resurrection? Paul does not engage in apocalyptic speculations about it, and he rejects as absurd all such speculations (vv. 35f.). For him it is not a resumption of the earthly life. "Flesh and blood" have no place in the life of the resurrection of the kingdom (v. 50). Neither is the resurrection something that affects a part of man, but rather the whole man. It is the conferring of a new, permanent and glorious form of life upon the dead person (vv. 51-53). This is a mystery involving a transformation of the perishable and mortal nature into imperishable and immortal. But he borrows apocalyptic imagery to speak of this final, glorious resurrection. The trumpet, etc. are such images. But this does not influence his notion of the resurrection, which is based on an original intuition of his on the two different ways of being of man's body. It contrasts sharply with the Greek conception of the immortality of the *soul*, for, he speaks of the immortality of the *body* (vv. 42-45). For

25. A. Grabner-Haider, "Notes on the Biblical Understanding of 'Resurrection' and 'Glorification'", *Concilium* (1969) p. 38.

26. Audet, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

him to exist is to exist in body. Therefore, the resurrection implies an imperishable body. What is this imperishable body? He calls it *soma pneumatikon*.

The word *soma*, "body", does not denote the body in its physicality or materiality. It has a special sense in Paul, and designates the whole man in his relationship to God, to other men and the cosmos. The body is not merely an individuating factor, but that which makes man part of the world and the world part of man; it is what effects man's solidarity with reality. It is the medium of relationship to others, "the mode of expressing the self and of being present to others".²⁶ Therefore, as man is relationship to others and to the world, he cannot exist as man except through his body, the *soma*.

The word *pneumatikon*, from the noun *pneuma*, "spirit", is used in opposition to the word *psuchikon*, from the noun *psuche*. *Soma psuchikon* denotes the natural body which is animated by *psuche*, the life-principle, in this age. God's *pneuma* is the life-principle in the age to come, and the adjective *pneumatikon* implies a sharing in this *pneuma*. Therefore, as distinct from the *soma psuchikon*, the *soma pneumatikon*²⁷ refers to the new body, which man will be in the age to come, and signifies that it will be under the complete dominion of God's spirit. The contrast between these two kinds of bodies is brought out by the four pairs of antithetical parallelism in vv. 42-44. The *soma pneumatikon* will be entirely different from the natural body. It will not have any continuity with it. Neither will it be made of the material elements which form the natural body. This he proves with the help of images drawn from agriculture. The seed that is sown is not the plant that grows out of it. They are entirely different from each other. It is through God's intervention that the seed becomes the plant.²⁸ The body that the plant has is a totally new creation. So, too, is the *soma pneumatikon*, a new

27. The use of this word in this context and in other letters requires that it be not taken in a constitutive or ontological sense, i. e., meaning that the risen body is made up out of the spirit as a substance (thus Audet, *op. cit.*, p. 5).

28. The growth of the plant from the seed was not, for Paul, the result of a natural process, but the consequence of a direct intervention by God as in the first creation. The plant's new body is given by God (v. 38), and hence it is a new creation.

creation. Nevertheless, the identity of personality in these two forms of the body is preserved by God, just as in the case of the seed and the plant there is continuity between both. Verses 39ff. serve as the foundation of the whole argument, where Paul first establishes that there are different kinds of bodies.

The description of the risen body as the *soma pneumatikon* implies that, by his resurrection, man who is always under the influence of God's spirit, and who will be free from the limitations of the body of materiality, will be unimaginably open to the whole cosmos,²⁹ making the highest degree of self-communication a glorious reality.³⁰ In the light of this conception of the pneumatic body, the resurrection, Paul understands, is a person's victory over death, for life, understood as relationship to others, far from being annihilated by death, only achieves its highest fulfilment. This makes Paul burst into a song of triumph in vv. 54f.

"Death is swallowed up in victory
O death, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?"

The references in this passage are to Is. 25:8 and Hos. 13:14. Is. 25 is part of what is known as "the Isaiah Apocalypse" (chps. 24-27), a late apocalyptic compilation dealing with universal judgment, signs that announce it, eschatological banquet, etc. Verse 8 is taken from the section (vv. 6-9) describing the eschatological banquet on Mount Zion, and says that death will be destroyed by God before the banquet takes place. Hos. 13:14 may mean either a threat to Israel or a promise of salvation. What is likely is that it is a threat. Death and Sheol, personified, are called upon by God to apply their terrible powers upon Israel for her sins. But Paul, who follows the LXX, wrenches the text from its context and gives it a new meaning. These two free citations from the Scriptures, in the context of 1 Cor. 15, proclaim the victory over death.

Death which puts an end to life is now a conquered reality. But it is still a reality. This implies two things: first,

29. K. Rahner, *On the Theology of Death* (2nd ed., London, 1965) pp. 28 ff.

30. Schoonenberg, *op. cit.*, 54 ff.

death still marks the termination of life. In the biological, psychological and historical aspects of life, death is the last point of our being and the moment of its total annihilation. But it is not the master of life. Secondly, there is something that is beyond the grasp of its destructive power. In its relational and covenantal aspects, life, at the moment of death, achieves a new (v. 52), spiritual (v. 44), eschatological (vv. 47f.) and Christic (v. 48) dimension. This is based on the presupposition that life is a covenantal relationship with God through faith in Christ. This relationship, by God's faithfulness, and power, is so strong that it survives the destruction of historical existence.³¹ This implies the resurrection of the body, which is the vehicle of relationship.

In 1 Cor. 15 Paul does not describe the nature of the risen body but only argues about the resurrectability of the body. His arguments are solidly based on a Christological foundation. Christ's resurrection demands as the continuation and completion of what has begun the resurrection of Christians (vv. 20-26). The Christians' solidarity with Christ, who is the first-fruits, and has superiority as the last Adam over the first Adam who brought death into the world, points in the direction of the Christian's resurrection (v. 22). Christian hope that is deep in the heart demands the resurrection as its eschatological fulfilment. The resurrection always implies the resurrection of the body. In other words, faith in the God revealed by Christ is synonymous with faith in the resurrection.

Nevertheless, death, seen in its radicality, still remains the most terror-inspiring reality; it places the last limit to the possibilities of our life on earth. But Christ's victory over it has destroyed its power to annihilate life in all its aspects. It has now become the beginning of a deeper relationship to God, men and the whole universe, and bears a new meaning. Instead of filling us with despair, it can now give a new tone to life, through the hope of what lies beyond it. No one is ever beyond the provident and loving care of God. This will give man strength and consolation in the face of death.

The Nilgiris

K. M. Sebastian

31. The question of the resurrection of those not related to Christ does not arise in Paul's mind. To his thinking, man by nature is not destined to resurrect.

Nirvana

The Sanskrit word *nirvāṇa-* (Pāli *nibbāna-*) has long since been part and parcel of the basic vocabulary of the great religions of India, but now, thanks to the widespread interest in Buddhism in Europe and America, it has also found a secure place in the languages of the West. The term has been interpreted in different ways by the Buddhists themselves, and the extent to which their interpretation has gone may be gauged from the axiom of the Tantra School that it lies in the yoni.¹ Nirvāṇa becomes the transcending of duality through *maithuna-* or the union of sexes, typified by the principle of Yab-Yum.² It is the purpose of this paper to discuss briefly the Buddha's idea of nirvāṇa in order to arrive at the notion he had of death's aftermath.

I

Etymologically considered, the noun form *nirvāṇa-* consists of the prefix *nis-* (Avestan *nish-*), which becomes *nir-* according to the rules of sandhi, the root *vā-*, "to blow, blow out, be extinguished", and the suffix *-na-* (from Indo-European *-no-*), which, under the influence of *-r-* in *nir-*, is modified to *-ṇa-*. The prefix *nis-*, "out, from, forth", can have a positive or negative sense; compare *nir-vṛti-*, "satisfaction, contentment, happiness", *nir-bhara-*, "full", *nir-vyūha-*, "prominence, top", etc., and *nir-daya-*, "pitiless", *nir-bhāgya-*, "unfortunate", *nir-ādhāra-*, "without support", etc. In the term under consideration *nis-* conveys the idea of *ex-itus*, going out, ex-tinction,

1. D. Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata. A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism* 3rd ed., 1973) pp. 326-30 (Buddhist Tantra).

2. This is a Tibetan expression consisting of the words *yab*, "father" (god, the male principle) and *yum*, "mother" (goddess, female principle); on the symbolism involved here, cf. H. Hoffmann, *Die Religionen Tibets. Bon und Lamaismus in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Freiburg i. Br., 1956), and G. Tucci-W. Heissing, *Die Religionen Tibets und der Mongolei* (Die Religionen der Menschheit 20, Stuttgart, 1975).

and the question as to what is it that goes out or is extinguished will be answered in the course of our study.

As for the root *vā-*, it goes back to Indo-European *wē-*³, “to blow, breathe”, and denotes in general the special activity of the wind; compare the verbal forms, Sanskrit *vāti*, Avestan *vāiti*, “blows”, and the equivalent in Greek *aēsi*, id. Special mention must be made here of the participial formation *wē-nt-*, *wē-nt-os*, this latter form surviving in Latin as *ventus*, “wind”. To be noted are the forms created with the help of *-t-*, namely, Sanskrit *vāta-*, and Avestan *vātō*, “wind”. At times the ending *-ya-* (Indo-European *-yo-*) is added to the root, thus giving rise to the verbal formation, Sanskrit *vāyati*, “blows”, whose Avestan equivalent *fra-vāyeiti* has the meaning “extinguishes”.⁴

The root *vā-* is very old, occurring in the *R̥gveda* with its literal sense,⁵ and there accrue to it in later sources such secondary meanings as “to emit an odour, smell, hurt”, etc. The combination *nir-vā-*, “to blow, cease to blow, be blown out, extinguished, be allayed, refreshed, exhilarated”, is post-Vedic, occurring in the epics, etc., but the causative form *nirvāpyati*, “extinguishes, allays, refreshes”, is part of the vocabulary of the first Veda⁶. The German Pāli scholar R. O. Franke claimed that originally the verbal root *vā-* meant “to go”, and that even when used of the wind, it signified not blowing but rather going, a notion that was also applied to the fire or flame: its going out means extinction.⁷ In this view

3. J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* I (Bern, 1959) pp. 82-84.

4. Compare, “So long as he lives *ātrəm fravāyeiti* he brings fire to extinction” (Vid. 5:37).

5. H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig Veda* (4th impr., Wiesbaden, 1964) cols. 1246f.

6. Cf. 10:16:13, “That which, you, O Agni, hav burned, that you *nirvāpayā punah* refresh again!”

7. Cf. his study, “Die Buddhalehre in ihrer erreichbar-ältesten Gestalt”, *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 69 (1915) pp. 455-90 (pp. 475-81). Franke’s numerous articles have been published together under the title *Kleine Schriften* I-II (Glasenapp-Stiftung, Bd. XII, Wiesbaden, 1978). This important work, covering more than 1500 pages, is not accessible to me at the time of writing.

nirvāṇa will mean primarily going out, which is itself one form of extinction. Practically speaking Franke's discussions have not much bearing upon the problem under study, and they seem to be some sort of play with compound verbs in German which can convey so many different shades of meaning.

We come finally to the compound *nirvāṇa-*, which can be taken either as an adjective, "blown out, extinguished, dead" (i. e., having the flame or fire of life extinguished), or as a noun, "blowing out, extinction, death" (understood as the extinction of the flame or fire of life). Etymologically therefore our word means extinction such as takes place when a flame is blown out, or when fire burns itself out. The present noun form does not occur in the classical Upaniṣads, and it would seem that it was popularized by the Jainas for whom it meant something eminently positive (cf. the texts cited below). It is virtually certain that Buddha borrowed the term from the milieu in which he was exercising the ministry, and he made it the key-concept of the message of salvation he proclaimed endowing it, naturally, with a special fulness of meaning which hitherto it did not possess. We may note here in passing that the word occurs in the Mahābhārata with the positive meaning: supreme bliss, emancipation, involving union with the Absolute and the consequent transcending of multiplicity and duality.⁸

In the Pāli sources⁹ *nirvāṇa-* appears as *nibbhāṇa-*, and there is too the verbal form *nibbāyati*, "is blown out, extinguished; is refreshed, happy"; reference must be made here to the causative form *nibbāpeti*, "extinguishes, cools, refreshes". An expression that popular fancy has linked with nibbāṇa is *nibbhuta-* (= Sanskrit *nirvṛta-*), "happy, contented, free", the root in question here being *nir-vṛ-*, which does not seem to occur in Pāli in any finite form.¹⁰ Compare the following words attri-

8. Brief discussion in R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā* (Oxford, 1969).

9. For details, cf. T. W. Rhys Davids-W. Stede, *The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary* (repr., London, 1966).

10. The root *vṛ-* represents Indo-European *wer-* (cf. *varati* *varate*, causative *vārayati*); *nir-vṛ-*, a compound occurring in the epics, etc., means "to find satisfaction, delight, be at rest, ease", etc.

buted to the Buddha in one of the anecdotes occurring in the introduction of the book called *Jātaka*,¹¹ words which include a pun suggested by popular etymology: "In beholding a handsome form the heart of a mother *nibbāyati*¹² ... But wherein does *nibbuta* (happiness), consist? ... When the fire of lust is *nibbuta* (extinguished), that is *nibbuta* (happiness ...)"¹³

Before we proceed further, we wish to recall here the expression *parinirvāṇa*- (Pāli *parinibbāna*-) occurring in the sources. The prefix *pari*- (from Indo-European *peri* -)¹⁴ has a number of meanings: 1) round, round about; 2) further, in addition to; 3) against, opposite to; 4) much, very much, excessively, etc. The meaning "perfect, complete *nirvāṇa*" has been suggested¹⁵ a meaning whose theoretical possibility cannot be denied since *pari*- does convey the nuance of fulness, plenitude, etc.¹⁶ The concept of a perfect *nirvāṇa* seems to be alien to the modes of thought of the Buddha who was the last man to make subtle distinctions that had no practical bearing. It is better to take *pari*- as indicating achievement: *nirvāṇa* is the state of release, and *parinirvāṇa* the attainment of this state.¹⁷

11. This book, forming part of the Pāli canon, recounts the stories of the Buddha's previous births.

12. Be it recalled that *nirvā-* has the derivative meaning "to be refreshed, happy", etc.

13. H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (College Edition, New York, 1969) p. 59, n. 1 (pp. 59-61).

14. Cf. the Greek preposition *peri*, which has several meanings, Latin *per* (in *per ambulō*), etc.

15. Franke, "Die Buddhahere", p. 475, n. 1.

16. Compare the expressions *pari-kopa*-, "great anger", *pari-gudha*-, "quite secret", *pari tāpa*-, "extreme heat", *pari-jñāna*-, "perfect knowledge", *pari-pūrṇa*-, "completely full", etc.

17. Thus E. J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought* (London, 1933) p. 121, n. 4 (pp. 121f.). In support of the nuance postulated in the text we may cite *pari-pakva*-, "ripe, mature", *pari-toṣa*-, "contentment, satisfaction", *pari-prāpti*-, "attainment", *pari-bhoga*-, "enjoyment", etc.

We can understand nirvāṇa with reference either to the present life or to man's condition after death. As a state attained in this life, it is the same as *arhatva*-, "the state of being an arhat",¹⁸ who, in Buddhist tradition, is the one who has succeeded in eliminating *trṣṇā*- (Pāli *taṇhā*-), "thirst, desire", in all its forms, enjoys the highest possible bliss imaginable in this life, and can therefore be called the saint. However, since the aggregates¹⁹ are still in existence and are also active, the arhat's state is *sopadhiṣeṣa*-, "conditioned", of course, by existence. Death means his entrance into nirvāṇa that is *nirupadhiṣeṣa*-, "unconditioned", and on the nature of this state there is no consensus among scholars, both ancient and modern, Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

II

In modern times there have been interpreters of nirvāṇa who were the least qualified to do the job. The famous German philosopher Schopenhauer (1788-1860) understood nirvāṇa in terms of the utter cessation of the will to be.²⁰ It is to be borne in mind that this thinker was a morbid character with violent sentiments of hatred, suspicion, envy and the like; his relations with his mother were cold, bitter and even positively hostile, so much so that they stopped communicating with each other, and out of sheer jealousy he arranged his lectures exactly at the time when Hegel was holding his sessions. An abysmally abnormal

18. Buddhist sources, representing particularly the Hīnayāna tradition, frequently use the word *arhat*- (Pāli *arahat*-) which, from the grammatical point of view is a participial formation (i. e., *arhant*; Pāli *arahant*-) of the root *arh*-, "to be worthy" (from Indo-European *algwh*-, "to merit, be worthy"); compare the cognates, Avestan *arə jaiti*, "is worthy", and Greek *alphainō*, "to bring in, earn", etc.

19. That is, the *skandhas* (Pāli *hkandhas*) that go to constitute man in concrete; they are mentioned in the last part of our study.

20. For details cf. P. Gardiner, *Schopenhauer* (Penguin Books, 1963) passim. P. Hacker, "Schopenhauer und die Ethik des Hinduismus, *Kleine Schriften* (Glasenapp-Stiftung Bd. 15, Wiesbaden, 1978) pp. 531-64.

man like Schopenhauer has no competence to interpret the thought of a man who was so careful about the regulation of his feelings, and whose distinctive trait was universal compassion; the present remark holds good also with regard to other interpreters like Wagner (1813-83) and Nietzsche (1844-1900).

Some of the first European scholars to study Buddhism in depth²¹ understood nirvāṇa in terms of annihilation, an understanding which was also shared by the well-known Russian specialists in Buddhism. Historians speak of an aristocratic stratum in ancient Buddhism, represented by monks belonging to the upper strata of society, and it was this group that popularized the idea that nirvāṇa was the same as annihilation.²² In the initial stages of Buddhist studies in the West, when the Pāli texts were not fully known, the literature and traditions of the aristocratic circles were the only sources at the disposal of scholars, with the result that the theory of annihilation came to be widely accepted.

We shall not, in what follows, take into account the special views of the great Mahāyāna thinkers like Nāgārjuna (circa 250-300 A. D.) and his disciples. Heinrich Zimmer has rightly called Nāgārjuna "one of the subtlest metaphysicians the human race has yet produced",²³ and in the system of thought he has created, a system that takes as its starting point the concept of *śūnyatā*-, "void, emptiness", *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*

21. Survey of research in G. K. Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvana and its Western Interpreters* (Chicago, 1968); this work, actually a doctoral dissertation, discusses too the views of Schopenhauer and others.

22. J. Przylusky, *Le concile de Rājagṛha. Introduction à l'histoire des canons et sectes bouddhiques* (Buddhica. Documents et travaux pour l'étude du Bouddhisme I/3, Paris, 1928) pp. 368-70.

23. Cf. his *Philosophies of India* (Meridian Books, New York, 1964) p. 510.

become identical!²⁴ The tradition of the Sukhāvati school,²⁵ according to which the ultimate goal of life is the attainment of bliss in the paradise of Amitābha Buddha, has also nothing to do with the teaching of the Śākyamuni. Our endeavour shall be to survey briefly the master's teaching as handed down by the Pāli sources.

III

The Pāli scriptures, which are a veritable library consisting of several volumes and covering several thousands of pages,²⁶ claim to be the Buddha's utterances, but as far as the critical historian is concerned, this is a position that is untenable. As a renowned Pāli scholar has put it, 'it is given as yet to no mortal man to demonstrate that any one Buddhist sentence was spoken during the lifetime of the Founder'.²⁷ After having made this reservation, we immediately add that

24. Compare the axiom that he has formulated in *Madhyamaka-Kārika*, a compendium of his philosophy: *na samsārasya nirvāṇat kincidasti viśeṣaṇam*, "There is no differentiation of samsāra from nirvāṇa." On Nāgārjuna. cf. A. Bareau, "Buddhismus," *Die Religionen Indiens* III (Die Religionen der Menschheit 13, Stuttgart, 1964) pp. 155-60. T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism. A study of the Mādhyamika System* (2nd ed., London, 1961). R. V. Ramanan, *Nagarjuna's Philosophy* (Delhi, 1976). R. H. Robinson, *Early Madhyamika in India and China* (Delhi, 1976). J. Takakusu, *Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* (Delhi, 1975).

25. This school receives its name from the text it accepts as sacred, viz, *Sukhāvati-Vyūha*, "Description of the Happy Land." Amitābha, the Buddha of "measureless light," is also known as Amitāyus, "of measureless life." The sect became popular in China and Japan, and in the latter country Amitābha came to be known as Amida. Brief discussion in Bareau, *op. cit.*, pp. 151f.

26. The Patna edition of the Pāli scriptures in Devanāgarī script (1956-61 covers 41 volumes!

27. Thus Franke, "The Buddhist Councils at Rājagaha and Vesālī as Alleged in Cullavagga XI, XII," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1908) pp. 1-80 (the words cited are found on p. 20).

in the Pāli sources there are traditions that go back to the great teacher and faithfully preserve his teaching though certainly not his very words.²⁸

A remarkable thing about the Buddha is that he had a radical distrust of speculation for its own sake, a distrust that must be viewed against the background of the concrete situation of his age: there were, in addition to the upholders and proponents of traditional views, many teachers who with zest and zeal were propagating their own special theories.²⁹ The master is represented as branding the subtle sophists of his age as eel-wrigglers and hair-splitters; the following statements are put into his mouth: "There are, brethren, some recluses and Brahmins who wriggle like eels; and when a question is put to them, they resort to equivocation, to eel-wriggling.... Now there are recluses and Brahmins who are clever, subtle, experienced in controversy, hair-splitters...."³⁰ The Buddha found in the farrago of theories and opinions current among his contemporaries an unnecessary, positively harmful preoccupation, one which, instead of freeing man from sorrow, would plunge him deeper into it. This is a factor that must always be borne in mind if we wish to have a right understanding of the Buddha's attitude towards the question about the nature of nirvāṇa.

Whenever he was asked to state in clear terms his views regarding the aftermath of death, he flatly refused to do so, and one of the questions that agitated the minds of his disciples and contemporaries had to do with the condition of the Tathāgata³¹

28. The reliability of the Pāli canon has long ago been ably demonstrated by H. Oldenberg, *Buddha. Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde* (1st ed., Berlin, 1897; 13th ed. by H. von Glasenapp, Stuttgart, 1959).

29. I. B. Horner, "Gotama and the Other Sects", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 66 (1946) pp. 283-89.

30. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* I (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, London, 1899) pp. 37f.

31. This is the common designation of the Buddha in the Scriptures, and it can be understood either as *tātha-āgata*, "thus

himself after death. The Pāli compilation called Aṅguttara-Nikāya,³² in the section dealing with the visit of the wandering ascetic Uttiya to the Buddha, preserves the following statements supposed to have been part of the visitor's questions to the master.

*hoti tathāgato param maraṇā*³³

na hoti tathāgato param maraṇā

hoti ca na hoti tathāgato param maraṇā

na eva hoti na na hoti tathāgato param maraṇā

"The Tathāgata exists after death;

The Tathāgata does not exist after death;

The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death;

The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist

after death."

In simple words, of these various possibilities which, in the Buddha's view, is the true one?

Sutta 63 of the Majjhima-Nikāya³⁴ records how the monk Māluṅkyāputta once approached the teacher with a series of speculative questions, one of which was naturally concerned with the Tathāgata's own lot after his demise. Sutta 72 of the same collection purports to be the record of the dialogue the Buddha had with the ascetic Vaccha who too wanted to know what the master thought about the condition of the Tathāgata when

come" (i. e., in accordance with all that was expected of him), or *tathā-gata* "thus gone". However, compounds such as *su-gata*, "well gone", and *samyag-gata*, "duly gone", seem to favour the second understanding (Thomas *op. cit.*, p. 151).

32. This is a group of the master's utterances arranged on the ascending numerical pattern (things existing as units, as pairs, as threes and so on).

33. In Pali *hoti* is the abbreviation of *bhavati*; this is a purely grammatical matter that need not be discussed here.

34. This is the collection of the teacher's middle-length discourses (Pali *majjhima* = Sanskrit *madhyama*).

he was dead.³⁵ The remarkable thing in all these instances is that the great teacher does not give any answer to the curious questions of the enquirers.

We add here the Buddha's words to Māluṅkyāputta which will give the reader some idea of the Pāli scriptures: "I have not elucidated that the saint exists after death; I have not elucidated that the saint does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why, Māluṅkyāputta, have I not elucidated this? Because, Mālunkyāputta, this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom and nirvāṇa; therefore have I not elucidated it. And what, Mālunkyāputta, have I elucidated? Misery, Mālunkyāputta, have I elucidated; the origin of misery have I elucidated; the cessation of misery have I elucidated; and the path leading to the cessation of misery have I elucidated. And why, Mālunkyāputta, have I elucidated this? Because, Mālunkyāputta, this does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom and nirvāṇa; therefore have I elucidated it. Accordingly, Mālunkyāputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not elucidated, and what it is that I have elucidated".³⁶

Why did the Buddha refuse to answer the enquiries about life's aftermath? It seems most unlikely that he, on finding the theories current among his contemporaries wholly unsatisfactory became an agnostic; without any definite notions about death's aftermath, or that he left the matter unexplained so that the enquirer could hold whatever view he found appealing, for such a negative attitude would not have won for him

35. Vaccha had a series of questions to put to the Buddha: "Does the Gotama hold that the world is eternal, and that this view alone is true? ... Does the Gotama hold that the world is not eternal, and that this view alone is true?..." (Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

36. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

recognition among the masses of people. His reason, according to the unanimous testimony of the sources at our disposal (whose reliability cannot be doubted) was that speculative discussions were an obstacle on the way to the attainment of peace.

It is not lawful to argue that the Buddha visualized death as man's total annihilation, for according to a tradition preserved in the Alagaddūpama Sutta ("The Sutta of the smile of the Snake") of the Majjhima-Nikāya (1:139), when he was accused of being a nihilist, and of teaching the doctrine of annihilation, destruction and non-existence of existent beings, he vehemently protested: he had not been doing that, but had always been proclaiming the fact of pain and the way to its cessation. A celebrated parable illustrating the point should be recalled here: as the owner of a wood is not reduced to nothingness when grass, twigs, etc. are removed, so the real entity is not destroyed when the constituents are laid aside. Nihilism was therefore not part of the Buddha's teaching, and evidently a purely negative and nihilistic understanding of the ultimate purpose of life would not have won him name and fame as a teacher of the way to transcend pain and suffering.

Can it be shown that the Buddha had a positive idea of nirvāṇa, that he, in spite of all his reticence about its exact nature, thought of it as a state of ineffable bliss? The question must be answered in the affirmative.³⁷ First of all the master, as has already been noted, borrowed the term nirvāṇa from the Jainas who had been using it as designation of the state of ineffable bliss attained by those who had purified themselves of all karma and have thus transcended the cycle of metempsychosis; compare the following account of the condition of the person who is fully liberated: he "is not long nor small nor round nor triangular nor quadrangular nor circular; he is not black

37. On this point, cf. the numerous studies of the great Belgian Buddhologist Louis de la Vallée Poussin; for instance, *Nirvāṇa* (Etudes sur l'histoire des religions 5, Paris, 1925); "Documents d'Abhidharma, textes relatifs au nirvāṇa," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient* 30 (1930) pp. 1-28, 247-98; "Une dernière note sur le nirvāṇa," *Etudes d'orientalisme à la mémoire de R. Linossier* II (Paris, 1932) pp. 329-54.

nor blue nor red nor green nor white ... he is without body, without resurrection, without contact (of matter), he is not feminine nor masculine nor neuter; he perceives, he knows. but there is no analogy (whereby to know the nature of the liberated soul); its essence is without form; there is no condition of the unconditioned. There is no sound, no colour, no smell, no taste, no touch - nothing of the kind" (Acārāṅga-Sūtra 1: 5: 6).³⁸ In the Jaina sources Mahāvīra's attainment of enlightenment is described as nirvāṇa, with absolute knowledge as its distinctive feature: "... in deep meditation, in the midst of abstract meditation, he reached nirvāṇa, the complete and full, the unobstructed, unimpeded, infinite and supreme, best knowledge and intuition called *kevala*. When the Venerable One had become an arhat and jina, he was a *kevalin*, omniscient and comprehending all objects, he knew all conditions of the world, of gods, men and demons;... he saw and knew all conditions in the whole world of all living beings" (ibid., 2: 15: 25f.).³⁹ For the Jainas nirvāṇa though something ineffable and without a strict analogy, involves perception and knowledge, and especially the attainment of the state of *kaivalya*, the state of being a *kevalin* who, free from all fetters, enjoys the bliss of liberation. We cannot reasonably argue that the Buddha, as he took over the Jaina term, radically altered its meaning.

On examining the Pāli texts, we find that they describe nirvāṇa in terms of the extinction of the flame or fire: as the flame that is extinguished is no more and cannot be perceived, so the arhat who has been delivered from the fetters of desire and has attained nirvāṇa cannot be perceived and described (Udāna 8: 10). In the course of his dialogue with the monk Upasīva (Suttanipāta 7074) the Buddha remarks that as a flame blown off by a gush of wind comes to rest and disappears from sight, so the monk who has laid aside name and form enters into rest and disappears from sight. When the Buddhist sources employ with predilection the simile of the extinction of fire, what is involved is not the destruction or annihilation of the

38. H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras I* (The Sacred Books of the East 22, repr., Delhi, 1973) p. 52.

39. Jacobi, *op. cit.*, pp. 201f.

flame but rather its return to the original, invisible, inexpressible state in which it was before it was kindled; extinction in the case of fire is not its ceasing to be but rather its resuming its ineffable form. The Śvetāśvetara Upaniṣad (1: 13) compares the ātman to the fire produced by the drill: there is the material form (*mūrti*) of fire that always remains latent in the firewood which is its source, and there is too the subtle form (*liṅga*) of fire which never ceases to be, and which becomes visible as soon as the *indhana* or stick for drilling is drilled into the *yonī* or underwood. According to the traditions of India, when fire is blown out it attains its original, better state of existence, and when the Buddha speaks of the attainment of life's supreme goal in terms of the flame's waning away, he must doubtless be following the long-established tradition of India.

The element of mystery in *nirvāṇa* is accentuated by the Pāli sources. For example, when the monk Yamaka was obstinately holding the heretical view that the monk who had lost all depravity, would, on the dissolution of the body, be annihilated (Samyutta-Nikāya 22: 85), the matter was reported to Sāriputta, the master's favourite disciple, who went on to question him on the matter. Sāriputta gave the monk a pretty long instruction, showing how the Tathāgata could not be identified with form or materiality (*rūpaṃ*), sensation (*vedanā*), etc. At the end the instructor formulated the conclusion: "Considering now, brother Yamaka, that you fail to make out and establish the existence of the Saint (Tathāgata) in the present life, is it reasonable for you to say: 'Thus do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed One (Bhagavān), that on the dissolution of the body the monk who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death'?"⁴⁰ It is taken for granted by Buddhist tradition that to describe the Tathāgata's continued existence after death is as impossible as counting the grains of sand on the shores of the Ganges, or the drops of water in the ocean (Suttanipāta 4: 374ff.). In conclusion, the apparently negative statements regarding the condition of the one who has attained *nirvāṇa* point to something eminently positive, which is at the same time inexpressible and mysterious,

40. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

and not to something entirely negative (e. g., total annihilation of one's being).

We finally come to texts which affirm something positive about nirvāṇa,⁴¹ and which, for reasons already indicated, can never be regarded as the master's very words. The following passage purports to be an *udānavākyam*⁴² of the teacher: "There is a state where there is neither earth nor water, nor the state of nothingness, nor the state neither of consciousness nor non-consciousness, neither this world nor the other world ... There. O bhikkhus, I say, there is neither coming nor going, nor staying, nor passing away, nor arising ... There is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded; if there were not, there would not be an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded. But because there is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded, there is an escape from the born, the become, the made and the compounded" (Vedāna 8:1-3). Even if this text is not a genuine *Buddhavacanam*, it will nonetheless serve to show that in the early Buddhist community there were men (such as the creator of the utterance just cited) who understood nirvāṇa in a positive, though ineffable, sense.

We shall bring our discussions to a close with a list of words used by the Pāli sources to describe some aspect or other of nirvāṇa: *asaṅkhata*, "uncompounded", *ananta*, "endless", *sacca*, "true, real", *pāra*, "pertaining to the other shore", *nipuna*, "subtle", *sududdasa*, "very difficult to perceive", *ajajjara*, "unimpaired", *dhuva*, "immutable", *apalokita*, "not vanishing", *anidassana*, "non perceptible", *nippapañca*, "indescribable", *santa*, "tranquil", *amata*, "undying", *pañila*, "excellent", *siva*, "safe", *khema*, "secure", *taṇhākkhaya*, "destroying desire", *acchariya*, "wonderful", *abbhuta*, "marvellous", *anītika*, "unimpeded", *ajāta*, "unborn", *anupaddava*, "undisturbed", *akata*, "uncreated", *asoka*, "free of sorrow", *anupasagga*, "uncomplicated", *gambhira*, "deep", *duppassa*, "intangible", *uttara*, "transcendent", *amuttara*,

41. Convenient selection of texts for the common reader in E. Conze (ed.), *Buddhist Texts through the Ages* (Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1964) pp. 92-102.

42. In Buddhist tradition *udāna* is a technical term denoting a spirited, special utterance of the master.

"unsurpassed", *asama*, "unequalled", *apatisama*, "matchless", *setṭha*, "supreme", *jetṭha*, "higher", *leṇa*, "abode", *tāṇa*, "protection", *araṇa*, "hitchless", *anaṇḡaṇa*, "spotless", *akāma*, "desireless", *vimala*, "unimpure", *dīpa*, "island", *appamāṇa*, "immeasurable", *paṭiṭṭha*, "support", *saraṇa*, "refuge", *virāga*, "detachment", *acutaṭṭha*, "immutable state", *mutti*, *vimutti*, "liberation", *suddhi*, "purity", *visuddhi*, "holiness", *nibbuti*, "bliss", etc.⁴³ This long list of words accentuating the numerous aspects of nirvāṇa shows that in the early Buddhist community there were persons for whom nirvāṇa had an eminently positive content.

IV

Our study of the Buddha's thought about nirvāṇa, to be complete, must also touch upon the question of the layman and his attainment of life's supreme goal. It is an undeniable fact that the Buddha addressed his message primarily to the monks, yes, to men who had renounced the world and entered upon the special way of life he had taught, and there are traditions to the effect that some of the first monks attained arhatship in an instant. The layman, strictly speaking, stands outside the pale of the order of monks, and, being engrossed in worldly affairs, he cannot tend to nirvāṇa in the way the monks do, but does this mean that he will never be able to reach life's final end? One possibility is that he can, by accumulating merit, hope to be born one day as a monk,⁴⁴ and then tread the road to nirvāṇa. Another possibility is that he in his lay state may, because of merits acquired in previous births, become an arhat all of a sudden, and when this happens, he will necessarily embrace the monastic life.

In the Hīnayāna tradition of Buddhism the arhat, who by definition is also a monk, is everything: only the monk can hope

43. Bareau, *op. cit.*, pp. 53f. B. C. Law, "Nirvāṇa," *The Cultural Heritage of India* I (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1970) pp. 547-58.

44. One is reminded here of the view of the Digambara Jains that a woman can join the order only when she will be reborn as a man in some future birth! The Śvetāmbara Jains allow women to become nuns.

to become an arhat, and even after the school reached the conclusion that, because of the degradation that had taken place after the master's death, nobody could any more attain arhatship, the monk retained his importance and the laity had to remain in the rear, their only job here on earth being to feed the monks! As a reaction against the narrow perspectives of Hīnayānism, there arose the Mahāyāna movement, teaching that all could attain Buddhahood, that every man was a potential Buddha. This is a development that need not be discussed here.

There is another problem too; since the Buddha taught the doctrine of *anātmā* (Pāli *anattā*), how could there be a personal variety of nirvāṇa? There is in man no permanent substratum or ego, he being only an aggregate of the five *skandhas* (Pāli *khandhas*) or elements of *rūpam*, "corporeality", *vedanā*, "sensation", *saṃjñā*, "consciousness", *samskāra*, "components", and *viññānam*, "knowledge". The conclusion can be drawn (and it has also been drawn) that since there is no ego, there is no person who attains nirvāṇa! Compare the following words of the Buddhist thinker Buddhaghoṣa:⁴⁵

"Misery only doth exist, none miserable.
No doer is there; naught save the deed is found.
Nirvāṇa is, but not the man who seeks it.
The path exists, but not the traveller on it."

However, it is possible to understand the doctrine of *anattā* as a denial of the equation of *ātman* (Pāli *atta*) with the *skandhas* or elements, and not as a denial of the ego as such: what the master teaches is that the ego is not the same as the aggregate of the five elements; he does not say that there is no ego as such.⁴⁶ In this case nirvāṇa is something personal: "Nirvāṇa is, and there is the man who seeks (and finds) it!"

To conclude, "Le Bouddhisme primitif était une religion de joie, de bienveillance à l'égard de tous les êtres, qui promettait à ses fidèles la félicité du svarga."⁴⁷

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45. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

46. On this point, cf. E. Frauwallner, *History of Indian Philosophy* I (Delhi, 1973) pp. 177f.

47. Przylusky, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

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